Cops admit lapses on Indon 'demolition man'

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

e-mail: feedback@inquirer.com.ph
Thursday, February 21, 2002 ★★ 38 pages / 3 sections / vol.17 / no. 75 P15
website: www.inq7.net

RP envoy's son faces assault charge in US

By Armand N. Nocum

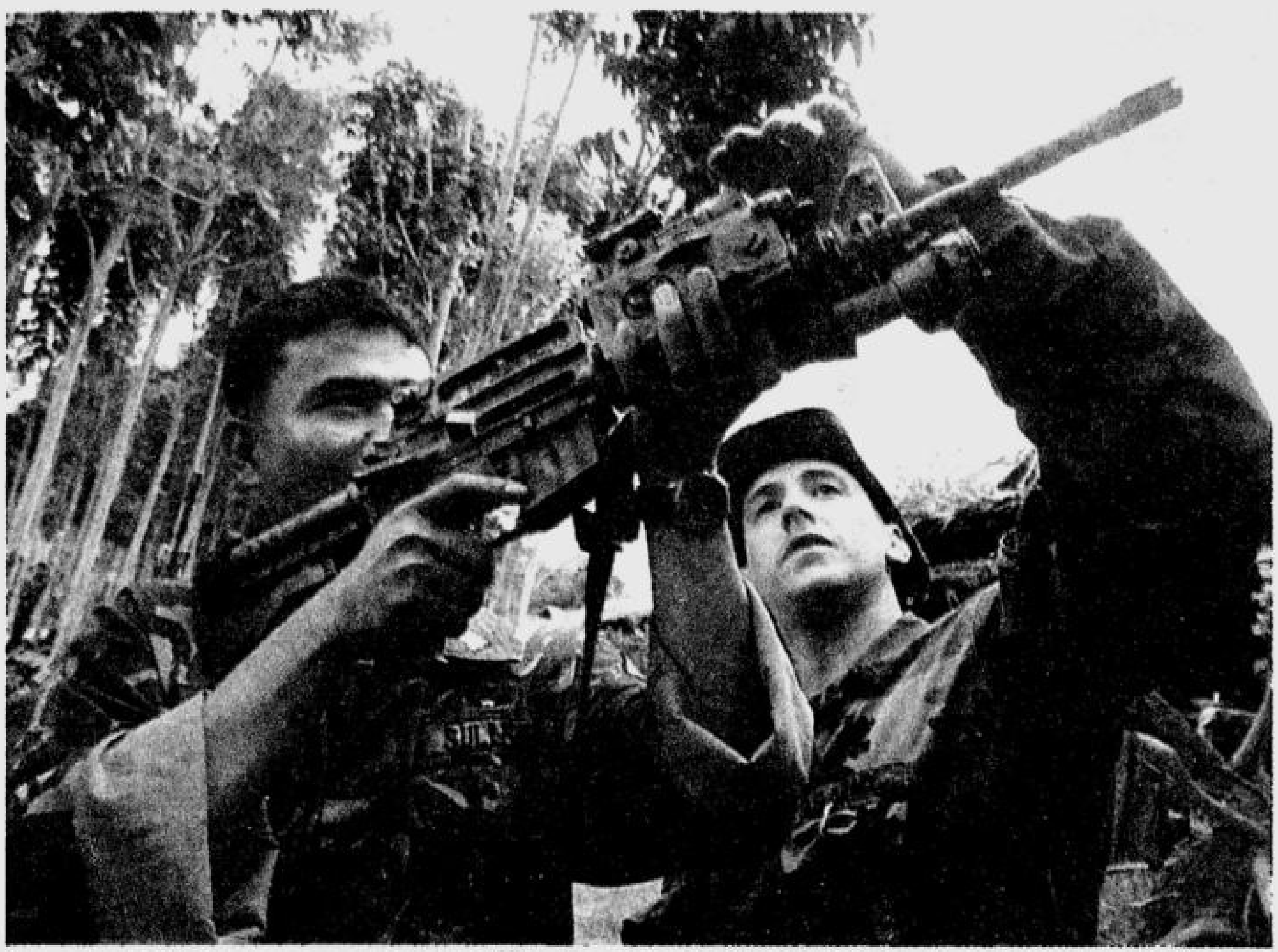
A SON of Philippine Ambassador to Italy Philippe Lhuillier has been accused of assaulting his Filipino-American girlfriend in the United States and fleeing from justice there.

Lawyers of Kelly Murga Mortensen have sought the help of the justice and foreign affairs departments in serving

RP/A15

What about Ediborah?

Captive's 4 kids have dropped out of school


READY, aim, fire. US Army's S/Sgt. Neil Estrada teaches Filipino Army Sgt. Agustin Sulleza how to handle a state-of-the-art M4 Carbine whose features include a night vision scope in Tagbiawan, Basilan. VAL HANDUMON

THE FAMILY of Ediborah Pamaran Yap yesterday urged President Macapagal-Arroyo to also "take decisive action" in rescuing the Filipino nurse, not just her fellow Abu Sayyaf captives, American couple Martin and Gracia Burnham.

In a news conference at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, David Pamaran said the President had yet to promise the safe release of his younger sister.

"It pains us to see that every time she (the President) would mention (the release of the Burnhams), we would not hear anything about our sister, who is of Filipino blood," said Pamaran, a municipal official of Lamitan in Basilan.

Yap, 42, a nurse at the Jose Torres Memorial Hospital in Lamitan, was seized along with four others last June as the Abu Sayyaf bandits escaped from a military dragnet in the town proper. The Burnhams were among 20 people earlier abducted from the Dos Palmas Resort in Palawan.

Intense military operations against the bandits had resulted in the release or escape of the hostages, except for Yap and the American missionary couple.

"We want the President to take decisive action in working for the release of my sister," said Pamaran, 45, who arrived from Cagayan de Oro City to join a prayer rally of the Philippine Nurses Association (PNA) at the Edsa Shrine to press for his sister's rescue.

PNA representatives said the situation was worsened by Ms Macapagal's promise to US President George W. Bush that the government would soon recover the Burnhams.

Pamaran said, "the last communication we got from my sister was when Sheila Bunyag was released. We haven't heard from her since."

Bunyag, a midwife, was among Yap's companions who were freed by the Abu Sayyaf.

WHAT/A14

GIs move deeper into Basilan jungle

US SPECIAL Forces yesterday moved deeper into the remote jungle-clad hills to join Philippine troops in the stronghold of the Abu Sayyaf in Basilan. The bandit group has been linked to the terror network of Osama bin Laden.

Some of about 80 US Special Forces deployed in Basilan left the Tagbiawan military base for the bandit-infested interior in armored personnel carriers, trucks and pickups along with Philippine Scout Rangers and Marines.

Officials said they would spread out over various Philippine military detachments on the island, with not more than two or three at any one post.

Some 6,000 Philippine troops are in Basilan and 160 US Special Forces will be there until June to train them. Another 500 US support personnel will be in Zamboanga and Cebu cities.

It is the biggest expansion of Washington's war on terror after the campaign in Afghanistan.

On Tuesday, President George W. Bush said the Philippines was one of the countries where the United States would maintain a "forward presence."

Also on Tuesday, the US forces tested their night vision capabilities, landing at Tagbiawan by Chinook MH-47 helicopters at dead of night and bedding down on the landing strip until the morning.

Lights at the camp were turned off

GIS/A14

"BLACK JACK" PERSHING: From governor of the Moro province he rose to general of the armies during World War I.

Pershing's ghost haunts Abus 100 years later

ZAMBOANGA CITY—A nondescript park downtown is named after US Gen. John Pershing, who tamed Mindanao at the dawn of the American century.

In a decaying building across the street sits EA College, whose most famous (notorious) alumnus is arguably Aldam Tilao, alias Abu Sabaya, leader of the ruthless Abu Sayyaf bandits.

Nearly 100 years after Pershing's exploits, Americans are again girding for war against Moro rebels, this time against Sabaya's band of self-styled Moro independence fighters linked to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida terror network.

A history professor recalled Pershing's role in a cultural crash course for the newly arrived US Special Forces troops.

"The Americans, your forefathers, introduced among all things American the democratic process, public educa-

PERSHING'S/A14

Palace twisted facts, says opposition lawmaker

By Christine Avendaño, Cynthia Balana and Martin Marfil

IT WAS not the Abu Sayyaf.

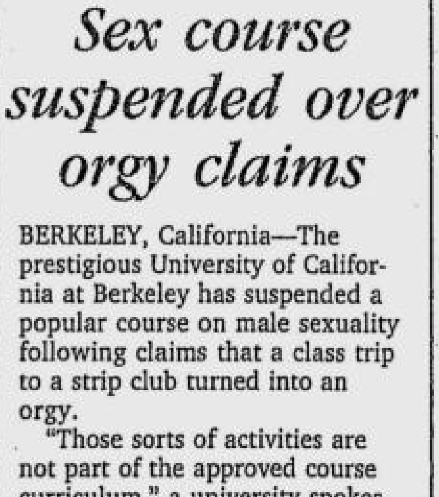
A former TV reporter turned minority congressman said yesterday that the gruesome videotape aired on Monday showed members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, and not the Abu Sayyaf, beheading military hostages.

House Assistant Minority Leader Gilbert Remulla accused Malacañang of twisting the facts to score propaganda points, saying it had deceived the public by claiming that the Abu Sayyaf was responsible, apparently to "justify American involvement in the military offensive against the bandits."

He found support from another minority legislator and a Malacañang reporter.

A former ABS-CBN reporter, Remulla said that he had learned from his brother, lawyer Crispin Remulla, about the tape, and that the tape had been seized by the military from an MILF camp in 2000, during the Estrada administration. "I could have had an exclusive story at that time because my brother was with the (Presidential Management Staff)," he added.

PALACE/A14


ANONG KLASE YANG CLASS NA YAN ?!

Sex course suspended over orgy claims

BERKELEY, California—The prestigious University of California at Berkeley has suspended a popular course on male sexuality following claims that a class trip to a strip club turned into an orgy.

"Those sorts of activities are not part of the approved course curriculum," a university spokesperson was quoted as saying by the Sacramento Bee newspaper.

The university is the jewel in the state education system's crown and is known for its liberal thinking and avant-garde courses.

The school has launched an investigation of the alleged incident and the fate of the course has yet to be decided. University officials were not immediately

SEX/A15

THE FALL OF JOSEPH ESTRADA

'I'm tired, it's time to end this'

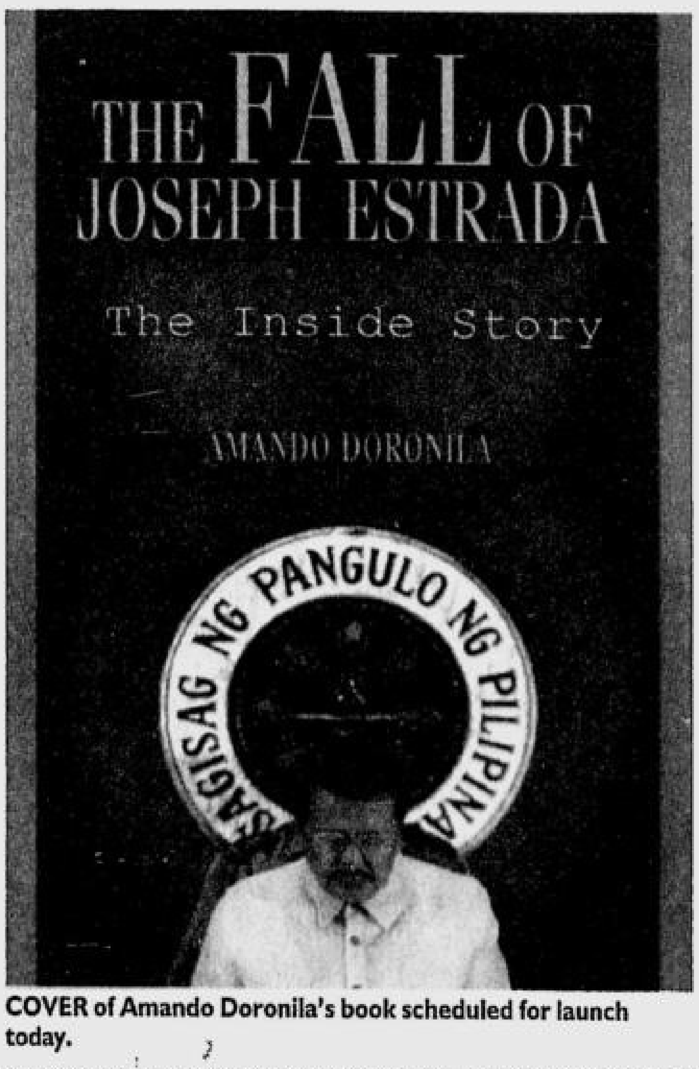
By Amando Doronila

(Editor's Note. Today, the INQUIRER launches "The Fall of Joseph Estrada: The Inside Story," an INQUIRER book by editorial consultant Amando Doronila published in cooperation with Anvil Publishing. From today till Monday, Feb. 25, the 16th anniversary of People Power I, excerpts will be published from what we are convinced is the definitive work on People Power II.)

ON NOV. 3 (2000), (President Joseph) Estrada asked (Finance Sec. Jose) Pardo to have dinner with him at his home on Polk Street. What he thought was a private dinner turned out to be a gathering of Estrada's political allies. Among them were Sen. Gregorio Honasan, former Sen. Ernesto Maceda, Philippine National Police chief Gen. Panfilo Lacson, Antolin Oreta, presidential adviser on economic zones, Rep. Luis Asistio, and Mayor Jinggoy Estrada. They were joined by Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco and Ramon Ang, Cojuangco's right-hand man at San Miguel Corp. They met until 5 a.m.

The meeting was intended to formulate a survival strategy for Estrada. Pardo and Cojuangco were prepared to lay down a plan for Estrada's graceful exit. They considered two options: first, a compromise arrangement; and, second, the Marcos route. Cojuangco was for negotiations for a graceful

I'M/A4



COVER of Amando Doronila's book scheduled for launch today.

Erap: All I need is four months abroad

By Juliet Javellana and Volt Contreras

ALL he needs is four months abroad.

Deposed President Joseph Estrada told a television news show yesterday that his serious knee condition would require him to be operated on abroad and then to stay there for at least four months for the required rehabilitation therapy.

He said his knee condition—earlier diagnosed as osteoarthritis in both knees—had become so bad that he required steroid shots just to attend court hearings.

His US-based doctor did not want to come to the country, he added, because he has other patients to attend to and because his assistants are concerned about the security situation here.

"I thank the senators who had the heart and the kindness (to sign the Senate resolution recommending medical treatment abroad)," Estrada said. He said the treatment was crucial. "I don't want people, especially my political opponents, to say I am doing this just

ERAP/A15

Second FRONT PAGE

TERRORIST 'DEMOLITION MAN'

Cops admit lapses on Indon

Terror group larger than US had thought

WASHINGTON—The size and sophistication of an al-Qaida affiliate group in Southeast Asia was far greater than the Pentagon expected, a defense official said Tuesday.

The group, Jemaah Islamiyah, is an Islamic extremist network allied by common cause with al-Qaida to oppose US interests, the official said. It has ties in Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines, and had sent some of its fighters to be trained in Afghanistan.

"It's a lot larger or more robust than we thought," the official said, briefing reporters on the condition of anonymity.

But there's no sign that al-Qaida's surviving senior leadership is headed to that part of the world—or any other, for the moment, the official said.

Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network has "lost its center of gravity," and its safe haven in Afghanistan, the official said, after the US military helped Afghan fighters remove its Taliban protectors from power.

The official said the al-Qaida leaders haven't gone to Somalia—regarded as one potential new home—as once feared. Officials still don't have a fix on Osama bin Laden, he said.

He said there's evidence the group may begin to function in a decentralized manner, with local "franchises" conducting their own terrorist attacks, rather than waiting for direction and funding from Afghanistan. *AP*

By TJ Burgonio

POLICE officials admitted yesterday committing procedural lapses that led to the dismissal of an illegal possession of explosives case against suspected international terrorist Fathur al-Ghozi.

The authorities, however, vowed to refile the case against the Indonesian who is believed to be a key figure in Jama'ah Islamiyah, an alleged terrorist network active in Southeast Asia and with links to the al-Qaida network of Osama bin Laden.

Director Lucas Managuelod, police director for investigation and detective management, acknowledged that police failed to present to the court samples of the cache of explosives seized from al-Ghozi's General Santos City home. He admitted that the photographs of the evidence that they submitted to the court were "not just not enough."

"The charge was dismissed without prejudice to its refiling because there was a need for additional evidence," Justice Undersecretary Manuel Teehankee told Agence France Presse.

Immigration laws

The 30-year-old al-Ghozi, whom regional intelligence sources suggest was al-Qaida's "demolition man," was arrested on Jan. 15 in Quiapo, Manila, and was charged with possession of explosives and ammunition and violation of Philippine immigration laws.

But justice department prosecutors on Tuesday threw out the charge of illegal possession of explosives and ammunition because law enforcement authorities "failed to present the physical evidence."

"This is only in the investigation stage and you cannot say the case has been dropped," Teehankee said. "There is no danger of his being released. He is detained and will continue to be detained."

Al-Ghozi's arrest led to the discovery of a ton of TNT and explosives paraphernalia buried behind his house in General Santos City that was capable of leveling a block of buildings.

It was believed the weapons were meant for delivery to other Southeast Asian countries like Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore, which have their own sleeper terror cells.

Al-Ghozi was also linked to the series of unsolved bombings in Metro Manila on Dec. 30, 2000 that left more than a dozen people dead and scores injured.

Fund courier

Al-Ghozi, whom Singaporean authorities said had trained at al-Qaida camps in Afghanistan, admitted he had delivered funds to be used in those bombing incidents to others involved in the plot.

Chief Supt. Crescencio Maralit agreed with Managuelod that while it would have been difficult to transport the entire cache of the recently discovered explosives to Manila, "police investigators committed procedural lapses by not complying with legal requirements."

Maralit, police spokesperson, said refiling the case would not violate the legal principle of "double jeopardy."

During preliminary investigation, al-Ghozi claimed to be an Indonesian national.

He said he had been recruited into the Jama'ah Islamiyah which has a holy war for its mandate. He said he had applied for Philippine passports using different names.

However, he denied that he had on his person explosive components at the time of the arrest.

Passport charge

A DOJ resolution concluded that there was a prima facie case against al-Ghozi, who yielded two Philippine passports in the names of Randy Adam Alih and Sammy Sali Jamil.

Al-Ghozi said he started traveling between the Philippines and Indonesia in 1996 in ordet to "obtain contacts" for the "holy war in Mindanao."

He admitted giving P250,000 to Hadji Onos, or Muklis, an alleged member of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front whom witnesses tagged as the one who planted the bomb that exploded in a light rail transit coach at the Blumentritt, Manila station.

Al-Ghozi claimed his Malaysian-based superior, Fais bin Abu Bakar Bafana, approved the grant of financial support to Muklis' group because they were engaged in a similar holy war.

He said the money was used to buy 70 kilos of explosives in Cebu. Muklis, according to Al-Ghozi, told him the bomb would be brought to Manila.

With Michael Lim Ubac and an AFP report

Sonny Osmeña, 'unguided missile'

MALACAÑANG is working for the ouster of Sen. John Osmeña as chair of the powerful Senate finance committee because he is an "unguided missile," so says the Cebuano senator.

Osmeña, who recently threatened to bolt the ruling Senate majority and tilt the balance of power in favor of the opposition unless the Customs collector of Cebu was relieved, said the Palace wants him booted out to derail investigations into transactions entered into by the Macapagal administration. These include the controversial PEACe bonds and the rehabilitation of the Philippine National Bank.

Osmeña took potshots at Malacañang while trading barbs with his own colleague, Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr., this time over the conduct of a joint hearing of two committees—Osmeña's finance committee and Magsaysay's committee on banks.

Magsaysay was visibly irked at the Osmeña's line of questioning of Norberto Nazareno, chief executive officer of the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp.

Magsaysay made a motion to terminate the hearing following an argument with Osmeña. Magsaysay had said Osmeña's questioning was sending a wrong signal to the banking community.

Pentagon boss tagged as gov't agent

By Alcuin Papa
and TJ Burgonio

AN ALLEGED leader of the Pentagon kidnap-for-ransom gang who was arrested in Quiapo, Manila, on Feb. 16 was supposedly a government agent assigned to infiltrate the group in order to neutralize it.

In a report, Chief Supt. Eduardo Matillano, PNP Region XI director, said Faisal Marohombsar had alleged that he was an "action agent" of Supt. Wilfredo Dangane, chief of the anti-kidnapping Sanlahi-Pentagon task force, tasked to effect the arrest of Tahir Alonto, self-styled leader of the notorious gang, and its key members.

Marohombsar was supposedly part of an "intelligence project aimed at neutralizing Alonto, self-styled leader of the Pentagon group, and other gang members," Matillano's report said.

The other members of the kidnap gang were identified as Alex Pandia, Rasul Engad, Nasser Bahude, Kamad Udasan and a Commander Vanguard.

Matillano, however, said he doubted Marohombsar's claim.

He said intelligence reports indicated Marohombsar was actively involved in kidnapping himself and that he enjoyed the protection of Dangane, supposedly his relative, and Supt. Efren Alquizar of the PNP's Region XII Anti-Narcotics Unit.

Matillano's report quoted the sworn statements of three witnesses, including a woman, who said they were former members of the Pentagon gang.

The witnesses said that when they were recruited into the gang, they were told not too worry about being arrested because Dangane was their protector. Alquizar was also not going to go after them, they said they were assured.

The witnesses said Marohombsar had actively planned and executed the abduction of Chinese engineer Zhang Zhong Quiang, automotive heiress Ma. Cecilia Bonifacio and Canadian national Pierre Belanger late last year.

Matillano's report pointed out that if Marohombsar was really a police agent out to arrest Alonto and the Pentagon gang, he should have accomplished the mission "a long time ago."

"The neutralization of Tahir Alonto and other members of the gang should have occurred a long time ago if Marohombsar were really an action agent, considering that he had been monitored to be in frequent contact with Alonto and other members of the Pentagon group," Matillano said.

Dangane's middle name is Marohombsar. He is said to be a cousin of Faisal.

Matillano had told the INQUIRER last month that Dangane's Task Force Sanlahi-Pentagon "was turning out to be another Kuratong Baleleng and Red Scorpion gang. It's very dangerous, the police were orchestrating (kidnapping activities) and making it appear it was their intelligence project."

Aside from Dangane, Alquizar was also named by witnesses Kalidin Saligan, Salik Mama and Grace Dulay as a protector of the kidnap gang.

Both officers have been relieved of their posts and transferred to Camp Crame, Quezon City, pending the filing of criminal and administrative charges against them for the kidnapping of Bonifacio and Belanger.

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DAR eyes direct payment scheme

By Gerald G. Lacuarta

FACED with a huge budget cut this year, the Department of Agrarian Reform has decided that farmers pay directly for land they acquire from landowners through the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program.

Agrarian Secretary Hernani Braganza yesterday said he has ordered all DAR field officers to look for "alternative modes" of acquiring land without the government having to pay for it as Congress has approved a budget of only P2.8 billion for land acquisition this year.

Braganza said the P2.8 billion would pay for only 70,000 hectares of agricultural land.

No Edsa Shrine gathering

By Christian V. Esguerra
and Dona Pazzibugan

THERE will be no massive political gathering of Edsa veterans at the historic Edsa Shrine during the upcoming anniversary of the first people power uprising, Edsa Commission official Pastor "Boy" Saycon said.

He cited an earlier Church announcement that it would no longer allow the shrine to be used as a political venue.

The change of policy was sparked by Estrada loyalists' "desecration" of the shrine—the site of two popular people power uprisings—in a series of protest rallies that climaxed in the bloody Labor Day siege of Malacañang last year.

The commemoration of the 1986 people power uprising will be largely held at the Edsa Chapel and at the People Power Monument located near the corner of Edsa and Ortigas Avenue, Saycon told a forum in Pasay the other day.

President Macapagal-Arroyo will deliver the keynote address on Monday at the monument, while a Mass will be held at the Edsa Chapel in the morning of Sunday.

During the commemoration of Edsa II last January, militant groups and other Edsa participants were dismayed when they were not allowed to go to the shrine which was tightly guarded by hundreds of police and military men.

Saycon said the Edsa Commission, the main organizer of the people power celebrations, expected another massive police deployment this year following reports that the Estrada partisans were planning to "charge" the shrine.

The pro-Estrada People's Movement Against Poverty, he said, was mobilizing up to 2,000 youths to disrupt the celebrations.

PMAP spokesperson Arnold Obina denied this.

The Edsa I celebrations will officially kick off tomorrow, with the joint Armed Forces and the Philippine National Police Day at the Libingan ng mga Bayani in Fort Bonifacio.

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Palindromic perfection: 20:02, 02/20, 2002

NEW YORK—Wow! For one minute, the world will be in perfect symmetry.

In a year that reads the same backward as forward, Wednesday evening will bring 60 seconds of palindromic perfection—at least for those who follow the Gregorian calendar.

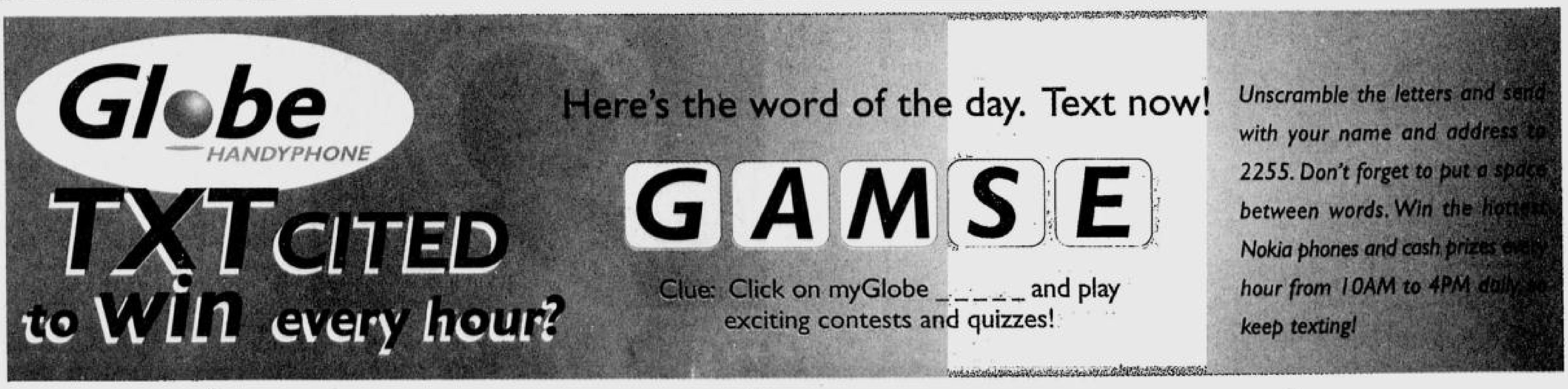
Come Wednesday, the time, day, month and year aligned at 8:02 p.m., Feb. 20, 2002.

Write that in military time and with numerals for the month of February and it works out to: 20:02, 02/20, 2002. In European style for the day and month it's just as balanced: 20:02, 20/02, 2002.

"A mirror day like this is a good opportunity for reflecting," said Mark Saltveit, editor of The Palindromist magazine. He is devoted to palindromes of all sorts—strings of numbers, words or sentences that read the same backward or forward.

The rare moment is drawing its share of attention: Saltveit, a standup comedian, said he already has three radio interviews lined up with European stations.

Separately, a website is calling for a two-minute prayer for peace to begin at the start of the palindromic moment. *AP*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LACSON IN THE DOCK

Solgen sees revival of Kuratong case

By Michael Lim Ubac

LACSON

SOLICITOR General Simeon Marcelo yesterday expressed confidence that the Supreme Court would eventually allow the reopening of 1995 Kuratong Baleleng cases to allow the government and the victims "to seek vindication and retribution."

Marcelo said in an interview that during Tuesday's oral arguments before the high court, the counsel for Sen. Panfilo Lacson had himself exposed the weakness of his defense in stopping the reopening of the 11 murder cases.

He said lawyer Philip Sigfrid Fortun failed to convince majority of the justices of the high court that the two-year prescriptive period on the revival or reinvestigation of dismissed criminal cases indeed applied to Lacson's case.

"The most telling portion of the five-hour oral arguments occurred when a justice pointed out that the draft submitted to the SC revision committee (on the Rules of Criminal Procedures) included the phrase that a dismissal amounted to an acquittal," he said.

"But that phrase was deleted in the final draft. It is clear then that the SC did not intend that a (provisional) dismissal of a case amounted to an acquittal. So the state is not barred from filing new Informations."

Marcelo is referring to Section 8, Rule 117 of the Revised Rules of Criminal Procedures, which bans the revival of dismissed cases after the lapse of two years.

Stunned justices

Fortun had invoked the provision, instead of the doctrine of double jeopardy, in trying to convince the associate justices that the state was forever barred from prosecuting his client in connection with the massacre of 11 members of the Kuratong Baleleng gang on May 18, 1995.

It was not clear why Fortun dropped the double jeopardy tack. Even the justices were stunned, but Marcelo said Fortun could not use the doctrine of double jeopardy since Lacson was not validly arraigned before the case was provisionally dismissed.

Under the law, one could not be put in jeopardy of punishment for the same offense unless he or she had not been arraigned by the court that earlier dismissed his or her case.

Marcelo said that since the doctrine could not apply to Lacson, Article 90 of the Revised Penal Code applied to his case.

Article 90 prescribes a 20-year period within which the state can prosecute a person accused of murder or other crimes, which carry the penalty of life imprisonment or death.

Quezon City Judge Wenceslao Agnir Jr. dismissed the cases in 1999 when the witnesses retracted their statements. But early last year, the Macapagal administration revived the cases by ordering a new preliminary investigation and the subsequent filing of new information against Lacson et al.

In a ruling on Aug. 24, 2001, the Court of Appeals upheld Lacson's arguments and imposed a permanent injunction on the revival of the cases.

This prompted the government, through the solicitor general, to file a petition for certiorari with the high court seeking to reverse the order. A reversal will allow the justice department to prosecute Lacson et al. for murder on the strength of new testimonies executed by Inspectors Ysmael Yu and Abelardo Ramos.

No arraignment

Marcelo, who represented the government, contended during the oral arguments that the previous dismissal of the cases against Lacson by Agnir on March 29, 1999 "cannot legally bar the filing of new Informations against him."

Marcelo, who argued ahead of Fortun, said Lacson and his co-accused were not arraigned prior to the provisional dismissal of the cases.

He said: "let justice be done though the heavens may fall."

Marcelo stressed that the case was simple: "On May, 18, 1995, 11 people were killed—two of them minors; and all 11 murder victims suffered the proverbial gunshot wound in the head and one even at close range, a distance of less than two feet."

He said the incident was a mass murder case. "Plain and simple. Pre-meditated... planned... staged and executed by the very persons sworn to uphold the law, to obey the Constitution, and to protect the weak.

"The scales of justice should be balanced, without tilting in favor of the strong and the powerful while ignoring the poor and the weak. *Fiat justitia ruat caelum.*"

He said Rule 117 could not apply to Lacson's case since it only bars the revival of the cases after the lapse of the two-year period. "The filing of the new cases is then allowed after two years."

Marcelo said the government's petition was anchored on the fact that the accused were not arraigned in the regional trial court, which handled the cases, and thus double jeopardy could not apply on them even if the government revived the cases.

Marcelo also invoked that substantive law prevailed over procedural laws. "Under substantive law, the prescriptive period for the filing of the case is 20 years; so it has not elapsed. We believe that the prosecution of the KB accused may continue and should continue."

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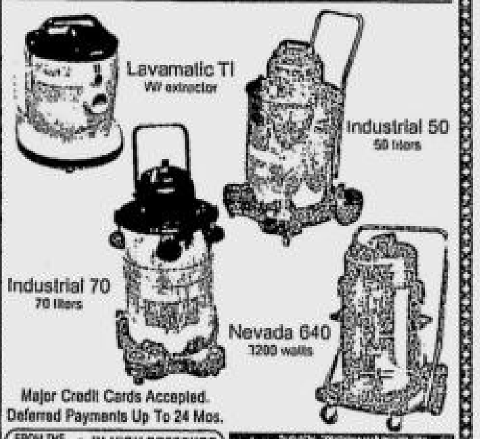

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Gloria won't stop Cha-cha talk

By Carlito Pablo

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday said she will not block suggestions to include discussions on amending the 1987 Constitution in the upcoming May 2-4 political summit.

Vice President Teofisto Guingona Jr., who is the president of the ruling Lakas-NUCD party, said Tuesday that the inclusion of the topic could be an "option."

"As part of the agenda, I will not oppose any debate on it," said President Macapagal over Bombo Radyo.

But Ms Macapagal said: "If I'll be asked where I stand, I'm against amending the Constitution but I'm not against debates."

The summit, which is being organized by Speaker Jose de Venecia, seeks to gather the country's political leaders and come up with a common agenda to push the country forward.

Ms Macapagal has been calling for a moratorium on political hostilities although the opposition has accused Malacañang of itself instigating intrigues against its political opponents.

Guingona recommended that the summit should give priority to measures like the computerization of the elections, and support for the proposed absentee voting and dual citizenship bills pending in Congress.

When asked about Charter change, Guingona said he prefers that this should be done through a constitutional convention.

President Macapagal earlier said she is leaving it up to De Venecia to decide whether her ousted predecessor Joseph Estrada will be invited to the summit.

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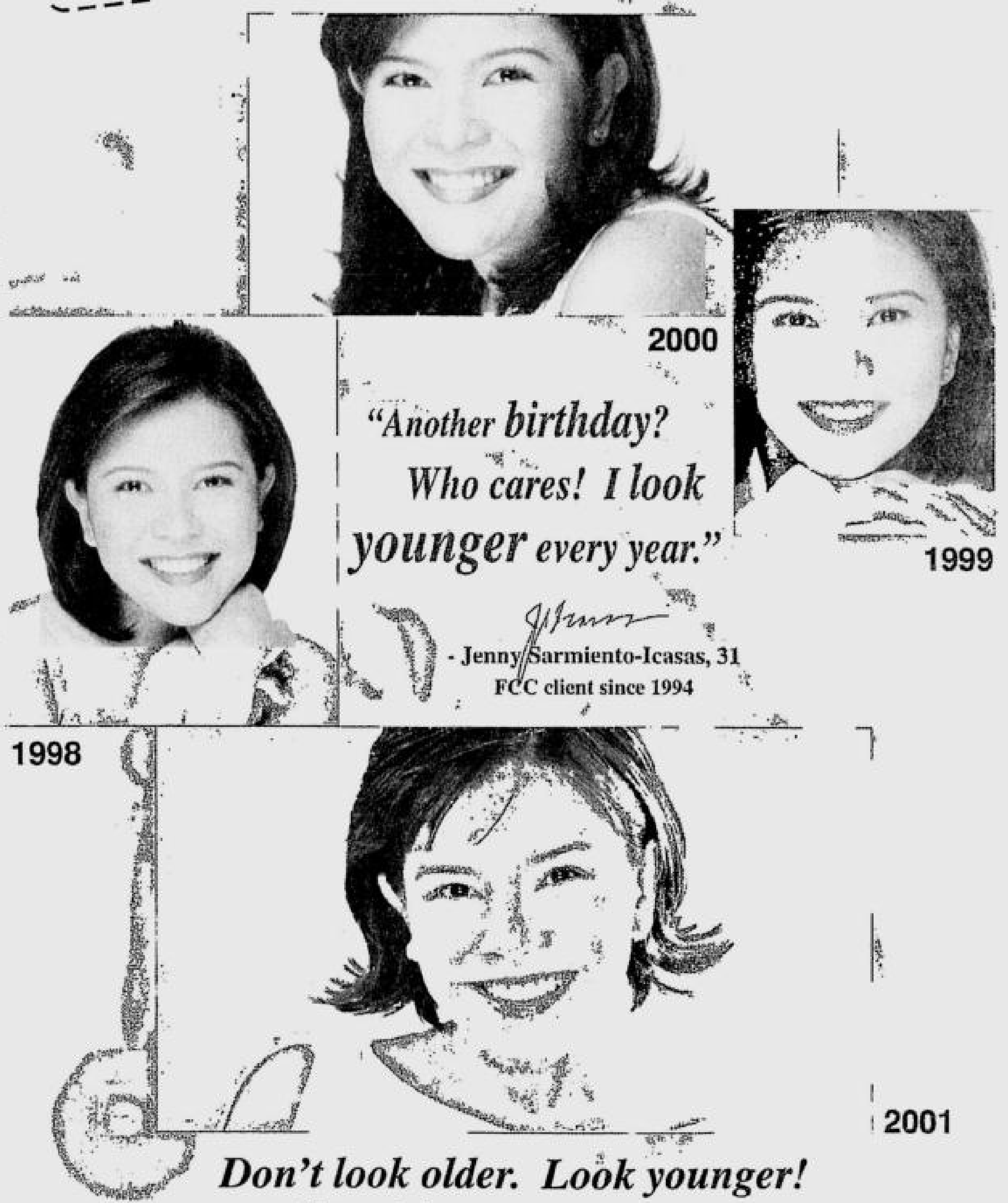

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'I'm tired, it's time to end this'

GMA, AQUINO: Main channels for negotiations

PARDO: Politicians told Estrada he was the "Philippine Robin Hood."

COJUANGCO: I have walked this mile before.

Fro m page A1

exit, saying it was the "easier road." Pardo asked Cojuangco: "What do you mean?" Cojuangco said it was an option to avoid bloodshed. Pardo told Cojuangco: "Why don't you talk to him [Estrada]?" Cojuangco said: "It's up to him."

Pardo felt uncomfortable that the political group was trying to pump up Estrada's confidence by telling him to stonewall. The group brushed aside the option of negotiations for a graceful exit.

It was at this point that Pardo and Cojuangco sought a private talk with Estrada. At the meeting at a corner of the house, away from the political advisers, Estrada asked: "Where did I go wrong?" Pardo said: "The economic team can no longer be effective. The response to policy instruments does not generate confidence." They told Estrada this was a "defining moment" for him.

Estrada asked Cojuangco: *"Ano ang tingin mo?"*

Cojuangco said: "I have walked this mile before." He was referring to the hasty flight of his family to Hawaii together with President Marcos after Marcos fled Malacañang. Estrada said: *"Pati ikaw, ganoon ang* feeling *mo?"*

Before they left that evening, Pardo and Cojuangco asked Estrada categorically if they had his consent to begin talks with former President Aquino, who was close to Pardo and who was a bridge to the political opposition. Estrada said: *"Pagod na rin ako.* It's time to put an end to this trouble." According to Pardo, it was during that time that he felt he had "touched the very soul of the man", who was "at his lowest point".

The following morning, Pardo talked by phone with Rapa Lopa, Cory Aquino's nephew. They discussed Pardo's draft letter of resignation and the formula for a transition in the event of Estrada's resignation. Pardo set a meeting with Aquino at the house of her daughter, Ballsy Cruz. Before Pardo could arrive at the meeting, Estrada rang Pardo. Estrada said, *"Huwag mo nang ituloy. Huwag ka munang mag-*commit."

Pardo kept in touch with Cojuangco. Cojuangco presented a formula to Vice President Macapagal-Arroyo. The plan was called the "interim COO-(chief operating officer)-CEO (chief executive officer)." The vice president said she would consult Aquino and Cardinal Sin.

Transition formula

According to Lopa (Interview, March 2, 2001), the formula presented by Pardo called for power-sharing. Under the formula, Estrada was to be the head of state while Macapagal-Arroyo was to be head of government. She would be allowed to choose her own Cabinet, and Estrada would become a titular president, allowing him to concentrate on the impeachment trial. The formula was discussed for more than three hours.

ANOTHER channel: Mike Arroyo talking to Manny Zamora.

According to Pardo, those consulted included Aquino's secretary of health, Alfredo Bengzon, Msgr. Socrates Villegas, Cardinal Sin's right-hand man, Lopa, and former Supreme Court Justice Camilo Quiason. There were questions asked. Who will be commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces? Who will be the appointing power? Who controls the budget? The group seemed firm on the position that Estrada should stand trial in the impeachment court, and that only upon conviction would the issue of pardon be addressed.

There was also the question whether Macapagal-Arroyo would agree to the transition formula.

Unknown to Pardo and Cojuangco, talks about a deal were also going on in another channel—between Macapagal-Arroyo and Manuel Zamora, brother of Executive Secretary Ronaldo Zamora, through Macapagal's husband, Mike. According to Mike Arroyo (Interview, March 5, 2001), he had lunch with Manuel Zamora on November 4 at Tin Hao restaurant of Mandarin Hotel. Mike is a classmate of Buddy Zamora, Manuel Zamora's brother, at the Ateneo de Manila. Mike told Manuel Zamora that maybe it was time for Estrada to make a graceful exit and "we want to give Erap a parachute".

Mike said Estrada had to resign and transfer power to Macapagal-Arroyo, and give up his several mansions and P10 billion in assets. Zamora mentioned immunity for Estrada. Mike said, *"Hindi puwede* under the law". Zamora said, "You have not even reached first base in the lower House." At the time, the impeachment complaint indeed was still bogged down in the House of Representatives.

Lopa recalled when he met Pardo on November 4, Pardo showed him his draft letter of resignation. Pardo told Lopa he was uneasy with the meeting at Estrada's house on November 3 with his politician allies. The politicians, Pardo said, were telling Estrada that he was the "Philippine Robin Hood," that the *"masa* is with you," and that it was "really the rich who are against you". The group said this was the line Estrada should take and "if we do that we can drag this on to Christmas."

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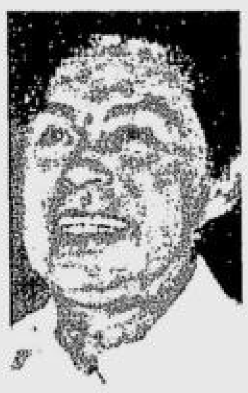

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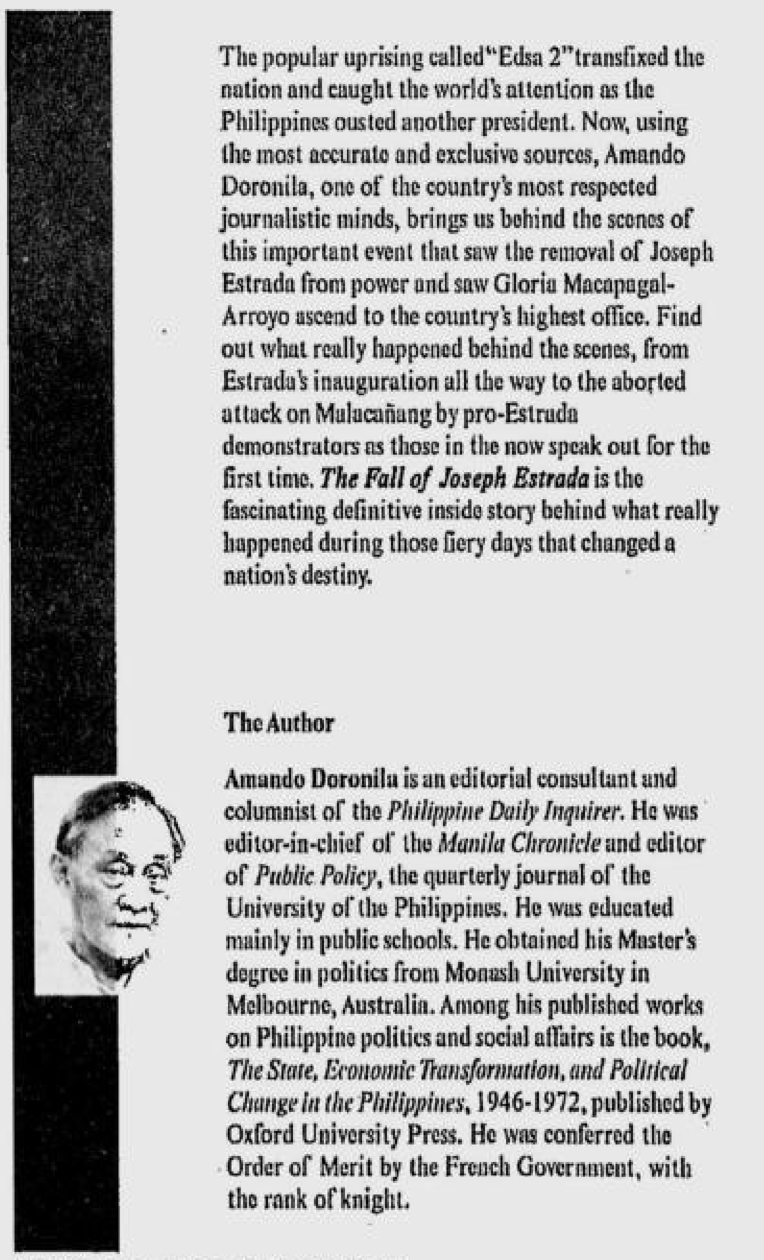

The popular uprising called "Edsa 2" transfixed the nation and caught the world's attention as the Philippines ousted another president. Now, using the most accurate and exclusive sources, Amando Doronila, one of the country's most respected journalistic minds, brings us behind the scenes of this important event that saw the removal of Joseph Estrada from power and saw Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo ascend to the country's highest office. Find out what really happened behind the scenes, from Estrada's inauguration all the way to the aborted attack on Mulacañang by pro-Estrada demonstrators as those in the now speak out for the first time. ***The Fall of Joseph Estrada*** is the fascinating definitive inside story behind what really happened during those fiery days that changed a nation's destiny.

The Author

Amando Doronila is an editorial consultant and columnist of the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*. He was editor-in-chief of the *Manila Chronicle* and editor of *Public Policy*, the quarterly journal of the University of the Philippines. He was educated mainly in public schools. He obtained his Master's degree in politics from Monash University in Melbourne, Australia. Among his published works on Philippine politics and social affairs is the book, *The State, Economic Transformation, and Political Change in the Philippines*, 1946-1972, published by Oxford University Press. He was conferred the Order of Merit by the French Government, with the rank of knight.

BACK cover of the Doronila book.

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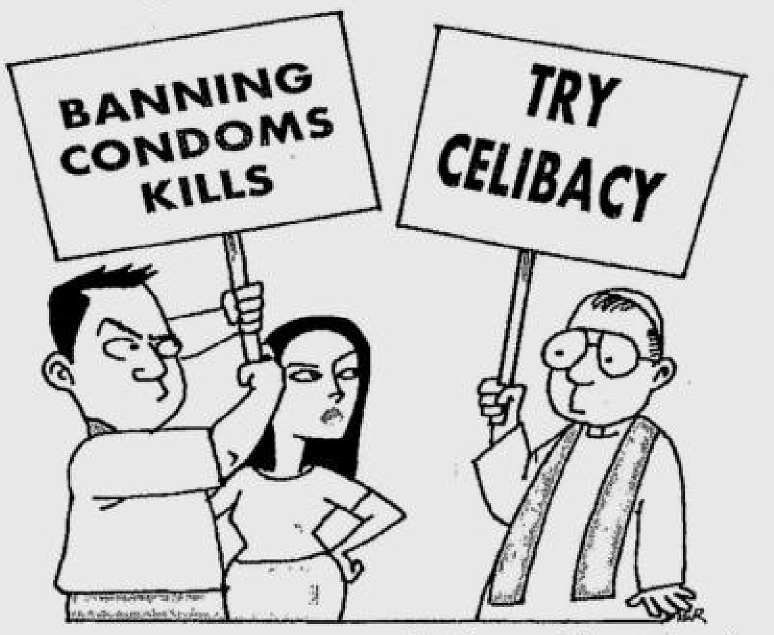
Battle royal over condoms

By Blanche S. Rivera



CATHOLIC bishops everywhere are facing the most vocal and organized challenge yet on the Church's population policy with the launching of the global campaign to end the Vatican's anti-condom policy.

The campaign initiated by the Catholics for a Free Choice (CFFC) officially started in the Philippines on Tuesday, with a prominent advertisement in the INQUIRER titled "Banning Condoms Kills."

The Condoms4Life campaign is part of an unprecedented public education effort to raise the awareness of Catholics and non-Catholics on the "devastating effect" of the Vatican's ban on condoms in preventing the spread of sexually transmitted diseases.

The CFFC pointed out that many of the world's 4,435 bishops actively lobby their governments and the United Nations to restrict, if not deny, access to condoms.

The group, which is based in Washington DC, also noted that the bishops ban condoms or education on condoms in more than 100,000 hospitals worldwide, as well as in Catholic schools and AIDS treatment programs.

Change of policy

"We know that many bishops disagree with the Church policy and are very sympathetic to people living with AIDS," CFFC president Frances Kissling said in a statement.

"We hope that the campaign will touch their hearts and get them to speak out within the Church for a change of policy," she said.

The campaign was first launched in Washington, DC during last year's World AIDS Day celebration, and focused on the theme that there was nothing controversial about saving lives by using condoms.

It has also gone online at www.condoms4life.org where those who share the same sentiments on the issue can register their names in the signature campaign.

The website facts about AIDS and the position of the Catholic Church, as well as the advertisements that have been printed in major dailies and billboards in Mexico, Bolivia, Chile, South Africa, Kenya and Zimbabwe.

The advertisements form the first part of the mobilization to change the Vatican's policy. The CFFC hopes to reach at least 12 more countries this year.

The CFFC said it was targeting countries with a large Catholic population and an emerging problem with AIDS, such as the Philippines.

The Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, which represents around 95 bishops, has refused to comment on the opposing global advocacy, but said it was aware of the campaign.

'Message is true'

"There is no doubt that the campaign message is hard-hitting and hard for the bishops to take, but there is also no doubt that the message is true," Kissling said.

UNAIDS director Peter Piot has also noted the grave impact of the Vatican's opposition to the use of condoms.

"When priests preach against contraception, they are committing a serious mistake which is costing human lives," he said.

"We do not ask the Church to promote contraception but merely to stop banning its use," Piot said in a newspaper interview in June last year.

Gloria visits fire victims

PIODURAN, Albay—President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday visited the victims of a fire that hit this coastal town on Monday and rendered 259 families homeless and damaged at least P13 million worth of properties.

Ms Macapagal, the first president to visit this town, gave P25,000 in cash to each victim-family.

The victims also received P5 million from the National Disaster Coordinating Council and P1 million from the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

The President also gave P50,000 each to the families of the three policemen who were killed by the New People's Army rebels who attacked the Kababayan Center they were manning on Saturday night. ***Tony S. Macasinag, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***

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Comelec asks SC to stop nat'l ID deal

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE COMMISSION on Elections yesterday asked the Supreme Court to stop the implementation of a P6.5-billion computerized Voters Registration and Identification System (VRIS), which will provide an identification card to some 35 million voters nationwide.

In a petition for certiorari, Comelec chair Alfredo Benipayo and Comelec Commissioners Resurrection Borra and Florentino Tuason asked the Supreme Court to nullify the orders of a Quezon City judge upholding the award of the contract to Photokina Marketing Corp.

The Office of Solicitor General (OSG), which is representing Benipayo et al., said the Dec. 19, 2001 and Feb. 17, 2002 rulings of Judge Ma. Luisa Quijano-Padilla were illegal.

According to the OSG, Photokina resorted to a "wrong judicial remedy" since it filed with the QC court a petition for mandamus to compel a government agency to honor its contract with a private firm. The OSG said contractual duties were outside the scope of the writ of mandamus.

The OSC said what should have been done by Photokina was to file an ordinary action for specific performance.

However, Padilla went ahead with her two orders, which recognized the validity of the contract and compelled Comelec to honor it.

"Padilla knew all along that an action for specific performance, and not an action for mandamus, is the proper remedy that Photokina should avail of. (It) is clear from her resolution (on Dec. 19)," the OSG said.

Padilla then allegedly committed grave abuse of discretion in favoring Photokina, according to the OSG.

The OSG stressed that the award of the VRIS project to Photokina was "unjustified" since the Comelec does not have the funds to pursue the ambitious project.

To avoid a repeat of the confusion and allegedly fraud-marred May 14, 2001 polls, Comelec revived the VRIS in time for the 2004 presidential election. The poll body then awarded the contract to Photokina on Oct. 3, 2000 but former Comelec chair Harriett Demetriou stopped the project on Dec. 14, 2000.

The VRIS, conceptualized under the term of Demetriou, would manage the records of some 35 million voters nationwide and purge the list of multiple and fictitious registrants.

Pagcor president named

SOCIO-CIVIC leader Rafael "Butch" Francisco has been appointed president and chief operating officer of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp.

Pagcor chair Efraim C. Genuino said Francisco's appointment was made by the board of directors during Pagcor's executive committee meeting last Thursday.

"Francisco's inspiring leadership during his stint as Pagcor's chief-of-staff for operations contributed greatly to Pagcor's record-breaking income performance of P17.45 billion in 2001," Genuino said.

In a press statement, Genuino described Francisco as "an excellent team leader, definitely the most qualified to handle the job of president and COO."

Francisco thanked Genuino and the board "for their trust and confidence in me. "We have an excellent working relationship and I hope to build on it to help catapult Pagcor into the global arena," he said.

Francisco holds a post-graduate diploma in Human Resource Development from Ateneo de Manila University and a degree in History, Major in Political Science, from the De La Salle University. He served as president of a diversified outsource provider which went on to become one of the Philippines' top 5,000 corporations during his incumbency. He was also managing director of a firm which specialized in web site development and recruitment consulting.

FRANCISCO

A human resource expert, the 45-year-old Francisco pledged to further boost the productivity of Pagcor's 10,000-strong workforce. An original member of Genuino's transition team, Francisco collaborated with the chair in increasing the basic salaries of Pagcor employees which had been stagnant for 15 years.

Sex slave fund to end

TOKYO—The Asian Women's Fund, a private fund supported by the Japanese government, is to end in May payments to Asian women forced to serve as former sex slaves, an official said yesterday.

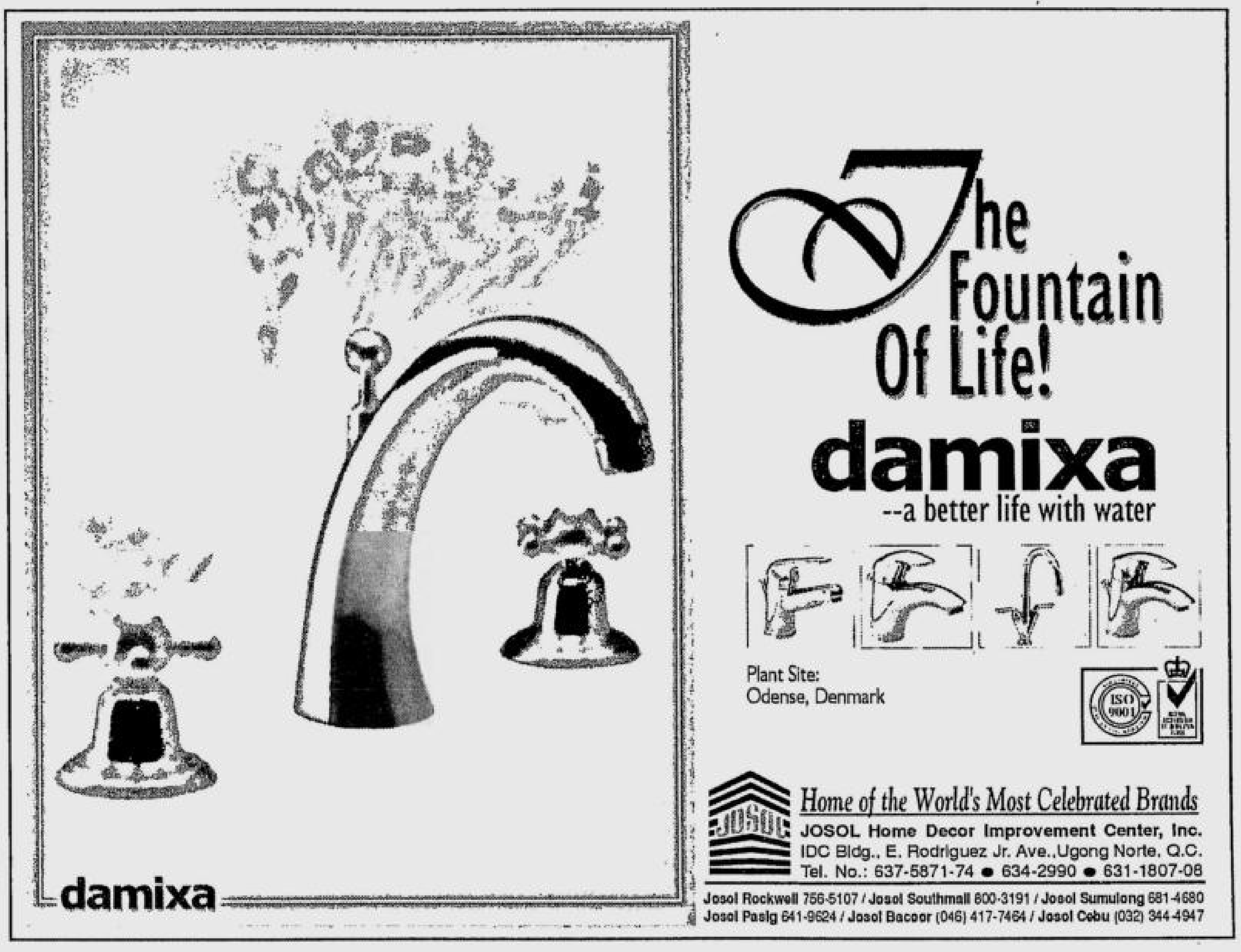
"By terminating our programs for South Korea and Taiwan, we will end our atonement programs, under which we give money to former comfort women," said a fund official, who declined to be named.

"After May, we will continue our education programs. Also we will put more emphasis on current issues that face women, such as domestic violence," he said.

The fund was established in July 1995 with money from private groups with the support of the government.

It collects private donations to give "atonement" money to Asian women who were forced to serve as sex slaves for the Japanese military during the World War II.

The government also provides money to the fund to pass it on to the victims to help pay for their medical treatments along with letters of apology from the Japanese prime minister. ***AFP***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Vol. 16 No. 75
ISSN
0116-2642

OPINION

e-mail: feedback@inquirer.com.ph **website:** http://www.inq7.net

The PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER, INC. has its business and editorial offices at
▪ Chino Roces Ave. corner Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati City
▪ P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City
▪ Our telephone numbers are 897-8808 connecting all departments
▪ Editorial Fax 897-4793 / 897-4794 ▪ Advertising 897-4807
▪ Circulation 527-3342 / 527-3348 / 528-0183 / 528-0186 and 528-0213 / Fax: 528-02-34.

100% soy ink

Publisher **ISAGANI YAMBOT**
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Overkill

EDITORIAL

THE MACAPAGAL administration has pulled out all the stops in the effort to demolish opposition to the intervention of American forces in the campaign to wipe out the Abu Sayyaf.

As if the administration's all-out policy of backing the United States-led war on the international terrorist networks of al-Qaida is not enough, it has launched a campaign of demonizing the Abu Sayyaf by showing on TV footage of their atrocities. The footage, run by two large radio-TV organizations, was seized from the Abu Sayyaf in 1995 and shows ghastly scenes of two soldiers being either hacked to death or beheaded by the outlaws.

Amid expressions of shock from the public over the gory details of the footage, administration officials have defended the release of the videotape as a way to show the "real face" of the enemy. An administration spokesperson said: "She (the President) agreed to show it to the public. We want the public to see the real face of the enemy."

The atrocities of the Abu Sayyaf are well known and have earned them wide public scorn. Footage that makes people puke at the breakfast table will not help increase public hatred for the Abu Sayyaf, the soldiers' zeal to fight them or public support for the administration's decision to allow US special forces to participate in joint Balikatan training exercises deep inside the Abu Sayyaf lair in Basilan.

No matter what the opponents of the Balikatan may say, the exercises as a means not only to enhance the fighting capacity of the Filipino troops but also to crush the Abu Sayyaf already enjoy wide public support. The release of the footage therefore is not only unnecessary but is also an overkill that cannot help in the successful prosecution of the war against the Abu Sayyaf.

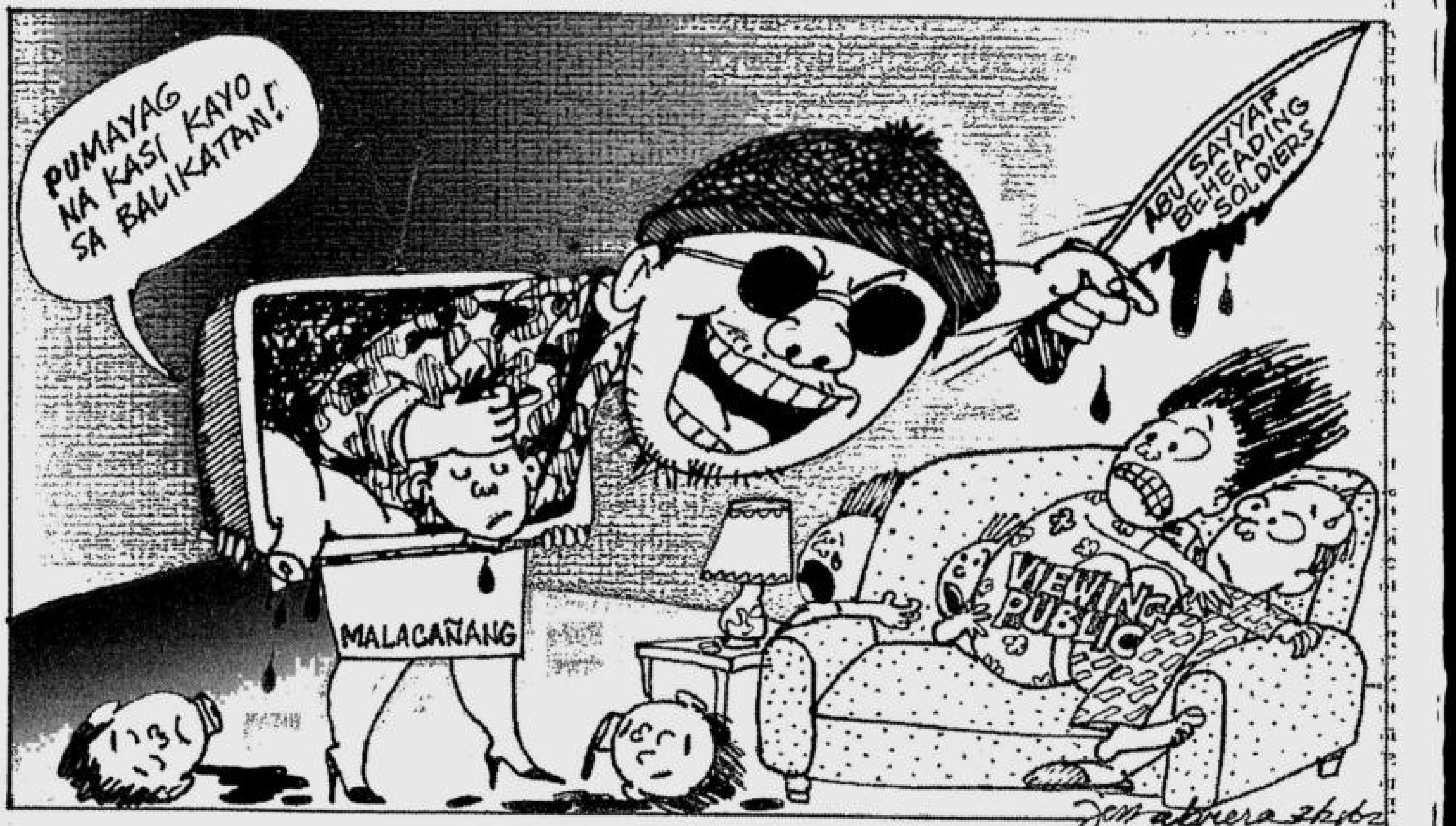
The military spokesperson says that the video is intended to overcome nationalist and leftist arguments opposing the joint military exercises at a time when the US special forces have already gone deep into Abu Sayyaf territory together with Filipino troops. The footage is the wrong answer to nationalist arguments which emphasize the issue of alleged impairment of Philippine sovereignty and breach of the Constitution. The issues of sovereignty and constitutional violations may be arguable, but the worst way to counter them is by showing how barbaric the members of the Abu Sayyaf are.

It is hard to see how a tape showing heads rolling can be used to answer an ideological argument. These different kinds of ballistic missiles have different trajectories that fly past each other. The administration is using the wrong weapon to crush an enemy.

The showing of the videotape is an overwrought propaganda tool which is so crude in conception that it is more effective in revealing the crudeness of govern-ment propaganda than enhancing the ability of the US special forces and Filipino troops to annihilate the Abu Sayyaf. The showing of the material parallels the effort to demonize the unlamented Taliban regime in Afghanistan. During the military campaign in Afghanistan to topple the ruling Taliban militia, which gave sanctuary to Osama bin Laden, the heavy bombing of Taliban strongholds was matched by propaganda showing how atrocious and barbaric the regime was, particularly in its treatment of women and Muslims who deviated from the rigorous orthodoxy advocated by the fundamentalist regime in Kabul. Video footage showed women being whipped for alleged infractions of religious laws after being denounced by zealots in the religious police.

This was the face of the Taliban projected from the propaganda perspective. But what won the war was not propaganda overkill but superior American military technology and the land offensive of the Northern Alliance.

The government cannot win the war against the Abu Sayyaf or sever local terrorist networks from the al-Qaida organization by going on a propaganda overdrive. The war will be won by competence and better weapons and military skills on the ground. The government is squandering its resources on the hate-the-Abu-Sayyaf campaign. Let the soldiers get on with the job in Basilan, and let's forget about inflating the monstrosity of that terrorist group. We cannot drive public revulsion and hatred for the Abu Sayyaf any higher.


PUMAYAG NA KASI KAYO SA BALIKATAN!
ABU SAYYAF BEHEADING SOLDIERS
MALACAÑANG
VIEWING PUBLIC

40% of charity patients die waiting for heart surgery

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

HERE is one more reason why government officials who steal large amounts of the people's money should be meted out the death penalty. Do you know that more than 1,600 persons who could be saved with open heart surgery die needlessly every year because of lack of funds? And this is only in one hospital, the Philippine Heart Center.

Dr. Lutgerio Torres, director of the PHC, revealed during a forum of the Philippine College of Physicians and a health magazine that the hospital has a backlog of more than 4,000 charity patients already screened and approved for open-heart surgery. (That was as of last count last year; there could be 6,000 now, he said.) Of this number, 40 percent will die before they can be operated on. The reason: not enough funds to subsidize their operation.

The cost to the hospital of each open-heart surgery is at least P300,000. Doctors donate their services free to charity patients. Congress appropriates only P150 million for the PHC. The hospital grosses P300 million from paying patients. One-half of this, or P150 million, is set aside for charity patients, so it has a total of P300 million as subsidy for charity cases. The Philippine Heart Foundation, which raises funds from private contributions, donates P100,000 per charity patient. Still, all that money is not enough to pay for the thousands of patients referred to the PHC every year for heart surgery. Almost half of them die waiting for the operation that could prolong their lives—even while the hospital performs five open-heart surgeries a day.

Obviously, if members of Congress will see it in their hearts to appropriate more funds to the PHC (and to other government hospitals), more lives could be saved. But the lives of their constituents have the lowest priority to our legislators. Top priority is given to their multibillion-peso pork barrel, a big part of which end up in their own pockets. If people die because of their thievery, shouldn't they be punished with death, too?

For the heart doctors, who gets priority to be saved? Obviously, those who need it most. And younger patients, especially children. Because, according to Torres, they will live longer and can serve society longer. The return on the investment is bigger. Patients older than 70 are the lowest priority because they have only a few years left anyway. *Hindi sulit ang* investment.

Cardiovascular diseases, by the way, have been the top killer in the Philippines since six years ago, Torres revealed. These include heart attacks and strokes. Not surprisingly, the rise coincides with the spread and popularity of fast-food chains here. These are the chains that serve hamburgers, French fries, doughnuts and other fat-rich foods.

The more troubling fact is that these chains are patronized mostly by young people. And also not surprisingly, patients having heart attacks and strokes are getting younger. "Persons as young as 25 years old are now being felled by heart attacks and strokes," Torres said.

Do not think that just because a person is young, he is immune from cardiovascular disease, he said. The buildup of plaque in the arteries begins as soon as a baby is born. The buildup progresses in proportion to the amount of cholesterol and fat you put into your body. The more fat you eat, the faster your arteries are blocked by cholesterol deposits. When the blockage becomes big enough and blood flow is restricted and the patient suffers symptoms of hypertension and heart disease, only then does he discover that he is very sick, brought on by years of careless eating and an unhealthy lifestyle.

Parents who want their children to live longer lives should wean them away from hamburgers, fries and other fat-rich foods. Anything fried should be minimized because you add fat during the frying. Prefer boiled, steamed, grilled, baked and roasted food. There is an exception to the last because the favorite *lechon*, which is roasted pig, is dripping with fat and cholesterol.

So salads are good, especially, vegetable salads? Depends on the dressing. Most salad dressings have mayonnaise, which is mostly fat and eggs, the yolk of which is almost pure cholesterol. Besides, most vegetable salads, like the standard Chef's Salad, have slices of ham, salami, and other fat-rich meat products as ingredients.

Curiously, the Department of Health, the Food and Drug Administration, the Department of Education, and the Philippine Information Agency, which should lead in an information campaign to educate our people, are silent on the dangers of certain foods.

Also, the health secretary and the directors of government hospitals should be more vocal and aggressive in lobbying for bigger budgets for their hospitals. Take the members of the congressional appropriations committee on a tour of government hospitals so that they will see the sorry state of these hospitals and their patients because of lack of funds.

Likewise, the health department, hospitals, the medical community and responsible citizens should lobby Congress to pass a law exempting from payment of tariff and taxes hospital equipment. Doctors are practically helpless without some of these equipment which cost tens of millions of pesos, plus taxes. This cost is charged to patients. It would help the constituents of our legislators if taxes on hospital equipment are removed because patients would pay much less.

Still, sovereignty

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

JAIME Naval, who identifies himself as an assistant professor of the UP Political Science Department, says (Letters, 2/19/02) that if I want to know where he got his degree, all I have to do is give that department a ring. Well, in our time (though I did not study in the University of the Philippines, I studied in a neighboring school) UP graduates were literate enough to recognize a rhetorical question. Or a hyperbole. When someone says that he does not know where on earth you got your degree for you to be saying the things you are saying, you do not reply by telling him where you did. That is like replying to someone who greets you in the hallway "How are you?" by giving him a list of your ailments.

But to his points:

He says he did not submit his comments to the INQUIRER as an original piece but as answers to questions put to him by our newspaper. Even then his answers were edited. I should, he suggests, compare his answers with the edited version to appreciate the difference between what he was trying to say and what came out.

But I fail to see, in view of his clarifications in his letter, how the INQUIRER editors did him a disservice by summarizing his views. Length is not always an aid to subtlety or nuance, sometimes it is an aid only to loquacity or tediousness. Some writing suffer by being cut down, others improve by it. My own experience with academic writing—and I do write that stuff, for academic circles, and not for a popular audience—suggests that the latter is more often the case.

He reiterates his points thus: We should stop blaming the Americans for every bad thing that has happened to us, and that continues to happen to us. We should take responsibility for our actions. "We should learn from the lessons of the past, take charge of our present and future, and say 'Enough.'"

The essence of sovereignty is free choice. It is up to us whom we invite to our house—that is exercising sovereignty. Why I seem to think sovereignty can only be exercised in one direction, namely, by slamming the door on American troops, he cannot understand.

Well, to begin with, who in God's name is blaming the Americans for every bad thing that has happened to us, and continues to happen to us? I do not know if even the groups that are loudly shouting "Down with imperialism!" are doing that. As far as I know, their analysis of society blames the local "ruling class" as much for our woes as the alien intruders, chief of them the people who colonized us and continue to dominate us. A not entirely unreasonable depiction of our state of affairs.

I myself am putting the blame squarely on President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo for inviting the troops in. Or, more accurately, for knuckling under the American demand to come in. It should be obvious even to an assistant professor of political science that America does not just want to rout the Abu Sayyaf, it wants to make the country a base for its campaigns in Asia and the Middle East. President George W. Bush's rhetoric must show the levels of its insistence of pugnacity in that respect.

Who doesn't like America, or things American? There's nothing more idiotic than those other letters that say people who do not like American troops in this country should not be wearing Levis or watching Hollywood movies. Of course, there are better things to do than watch Hollywood movies—the European ones are so much better—but that's another story. I myself like going to the Strand and Broadway in New York. Why should that make me like what the American government is doing to this country?

Rather than blaming America for everything bad that happens to us, I am doing precisely the opposite here. I am blaming us for the Abu Sayyaf. For our stupidity in looking at the situation in the South through the prism of our anti-Muslim biases, for the government's folly in launching a full-scale war against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front to solve the Abu Sayyaf problem, for the Armed Forces of the Philippines' greed in letting the Abu Sayyaf go when it had them in its hands. Why do we need to ask America to help us undo the mess we created?

Which brings us to the question of sovereignty. Sovereignty, Naval says, is free choice. He forgets one vital modifier, and that is "responsible." Freedom itself is not just the freedom to choose, it is the freedom to choose wisely. It is not freedom, as I said the last time, to choose to shoot oneself in the head. It is suicide. Sovereignty is not the freedom to sell patrimony like Esau did his birthright for a pot of porridge. It is the determination to defend it like a cherished legacy.

I agree 101 percent with him when he says we should learn from the lessons of the past. Had he himself done so, he would have learned that the Philippines has always gotten the short end of the bargain in its military relationship with the United States. Had he done so, he would have discovered that the notion of unleashing American military presence in this country and subsequently trying to tame it with TORs is an exercise in lassoing the whirlwind. Had he done so, he would have learned that saying "Enough" when the Americans go overboard is like bidding the waves to hold still. It does behoove assistant professors of political science to read their history. It won't just give them a sense of perspective, it will give them a sense of realism.

Indeed, had Naval read his history and learned from the lessons of the past, he would have known that there was a time when this country mustered the courage and heroism to say "Enough" after long years of being treated shabbily. That was a little more than 10 years ago, when the Senate, in one glorious instant, rose to stop the renewal of the US bases treaty, despite the loud protestations of another president, Corazon Aquino, and a fellow named Richard Gordon. And that took all of more than three decades to accomplish.

"The treaty is defeated," Jovito Salonga said simply at the end of the day. You don't hear "Enough" in that, you won't hear anything.

* * *

Comments to dequiros@vasia.com

'Justice first, mercy later'

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

A VERY reliable source told me that just before the first anniversary of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's assumption of office last Jan. 20, Joseph Estrada was told by his henchmen that no matter how they tried, they couldn't gather a big crowd to rise up against the government. The disgraced former president had reportedly told them that he was getting quite desperate in his Veterans Memorial Medical Center suite and couldn't bear his detention any longer. The impression given to the leaders was that money was no problem, so long as he could be rescued from his maddening confinement. But the method chosen to secure his freedom, i.e., to stir up another episode similar to the May 1, 2001 uprising, didn't work largely because most people, including the *masa* from whom Estrada used to draw support, didn't want trouble any more.

* * *

That story could be the reason for the powerful drive in both chambers of Congress to pressure the Sandiganbayan to let Estrada leave for the United States for surgery on his arthritic knee. The question, however, is, as the INQUIRER editorial pointed out, if Estrada were to be allowed to leave now, would he return to face the music? Rep. Didagen Dilangalen assures the public that his friend would return, but his *"usapang lalaki"* with Erap, as Rep. Prospero Nograles termed it, is not good enough. Rep. Butz Aquino had earlier hinted that the treatment should be complete, meaning it could stretch till kingdom come, or until a new dispensation kinder to Estrada takes over. That Estrada will not return is easy to believe. Then justice will never be served.

* * *

Former Senate President Jovito Salonga put this issue well in his recent statement, wherein he lambasted members of Congress for pressuring the Sandiganbayan with their resolution calling for Erap to be treated in the United States. Salonga argued that "there is a place and a time for mercy—after the cause of justice shall have been served." In a civilized system, he said, the priority should be "justice first, mercy later."

If it is true that Estrada's condition is not "life-threatening" and that the operation can be done here by Filipino doctors, Salonga said, "it would be sheer folly to let Estrada go." He pointed out that procedural law allows the accused, with the aid of lawyers of his choice, to prove his innocence in a free and fair trial—without the intervention of politicians. If Estrada is found guilty on the basis of the law and the evidence, he deserves to be punished, "regardless of what senators and congressmen may want."

Salonga emphasized that "without equal justice under the law, no legal system can exist which will allow mercy to have its final say." In our Constitution, the power to grant pardon rests with the President—but only after "a final judgment of conviction." That phrase, he stressed, defines the proper time for politicians to work for the release of Erap—after conviction.

What Salonga is pushing for is a speedy trial so that Estrada can be acquitted or convicted. If he is found guilty, the President could pardon him, presumably on the advice of her political counselors. But while his trial is going on, Erap ought not to be allowed to leave for abroad.

* * *

Star columnist Jarius Bondoc has a good answer to the members of Congress who argue that even the much-vilified President Marcos allowed Ninoy Aquino to leave for a heart operation in the United States at the height of martial law. Bondoc points out that Ninoy was first convicted by a court, no matter if it was a kangaroo court, and then Marcos allowed him to leave. The processes were given a semblance of legality. But here Erap's supporters want him to fly abroad in the middle of the trial and he may never submit himself to the court again.

If I may add, Erap should have his operation here. His US doctor can even be flown here—at Erap's expense, of course.

* * *

Earlier I wrote about the SSPE Children's Care Foundation that photojournalist Mandy Navasero has put up to help children afflicted with the deadly disease that attacks the nervous system, subacute sclerosing panencephalitis (SSPE). The disease is a complication from common measles and seems to attack mainly those from the lower-income bracket, rendering them vegetable-like. It can even become life-threatening. Mandy asked this columnist to help, and we have decided that it's best to assist those patients in Stage I and II as they have the best chance of recovering. The idea is to use the funds we raise to buy the very expensive Intravenous Immunoglobulin (IVIG) vials (P4,000 a vial) for those with that chance. From the PGH doctors, we learned that among a dozen patients with SSPE, many are in those early stages.

* * *

The SSPE Foundation has for its first beneficiary Benjamin Raypon, 17, of San Pedro Laguna, a school dropout who cleans tables in the public market. His case deteriorated from fever and dizziness to increasingly violent jerks. This month, after a spinal extraction, he was diagnosed with stage II of SSPE. He is confined at the PGH's Ward 9.

On the instructions of Dr. Thaddeus Jose Bayana, the SSPE Foundation put him on IVIG treatment. Today, after getting the initial doses, his speech is no longer slurred and his face has lighted up. Saving the boy looks hopeful, but donations are needed to support his treatment and the foundation's program. Please call Mandy at 522-5185 (or 89), or 522-1905. A soft-hearted colleague of ours with a macho image has donated a wheelchair for Benjamin.

Overkill and arrogance

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

NOT your sets, folks. The fuzzy images and grainy video shown during Monday's evening newscasts wasn't a technical glitch or a clip from the "World's Worst Amateur Videos."

The footage, supposedly from tapes taken from an Abu Sayyaf camp, shows the bandits-turned-terrorists beheading captured Filipino soldiers, and was officially released by the government for airing on national TV.

"Overkill" and "pornography" are just some of the criticisms hurled at the decision to allow the broadcast of such grisly footage. But officials, led by Press Undersecretary Bobby Capco, defend the video saying there was a need for the public to see for themselves the depths of depravity to which the Abu Sayyaf have sunk.

The point, it seems, is to bolster already strong public opinion support for the Balikatan exercise where US troops, supposedly as part of a training mission, would help our own soldiers finally run the Abu Sayyaf to the ground.

But if the point of the release of the stomach-churning video is to convince us that this band of kidnappers and extortionists are beasts and bastards, it's superfluous. Pinoys already know how beastly and dastardly the Abu Sayyaf can be. I can well remember news footage last year of the grieving families of the plantation workers who were kidnapped and then beheaded, supposedly because their families were too poor to pay ransom for them. So they were killed to serve as a "warning" to the rest of Basilan's populace, and to frighten the families of the other hostages into hastening the delivery of their ransom.

Mercifully, the TV stations didn't have to show graphic scenes of headless bodies to prove the grisly deed. But the message was delivered just the same.

* * *

IF the Macapagal administration is so sure about the rightness of its decision to invite the Americans, the legality of the move, and the people's support for it, why the need to resort to such gut-wrenching propaganda?

And why violate accepted standards of broadcast ethics, especially with regard to the sensibilities of viewers, especially young viewers, who may not be ready for such graphic violence?

"Aren't you going to write about the beheading video?" an educator-friend texted me. "Didn't they even consider the rights of children who may have been traumatized by what they saw?"

Children do watch TV newscasts, you know. In fact, teachers even require their young students to keep track of current events by watching the newscasts. And yes, did the smart guys in Malacañang think about the impact of the beheadings on children?

In the wake of the sensational coverage of the so-called "Marikina rapes" some years ago, a group of media practitioners met and formulated guidelines on the "coverage of crimes against women and children." Some of the guidelines, which apply to all news subjects regardless of age or sex, referred to the need to preserve the dignity of victims, even, or especially, in death. Was using footage of their execution for propaganda purposes a way of honoring those soldiers? And what about their families?

* * *

SEN. Rodolfo Biazon and other members of the opposition have called for a deeper investigation into the release and airing of the video, inquiring if it was approved by the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board. Since the body claims to protect the "morality" of the rest of the nation, couldn't it have done something to protect the unprepared and immature from such a traumatic sight?

According to a former MTRCB member (Biazon's wife Monserrat), the board has no authority over newscasts, since unlike public affairs shows that are taped ahead, the news shows are presumably aired live and use video of newsbreaking events.

But we don't even need to look to the MTRCB to exercise vigilance on the airing of such sensitive and potentially traumatic material. The content of TV news shows, after all, is overseen by news editors and news departments. In the end, it's the network's news people who have the last say on whether a video would make it to the nightly news or not.

The background story on the beheading video is that it had been in the possession of one network which for some reason (laudable, I hope) chose not to air it. But apparently on Malacañang's urging, it aired the scenes on the Monday early evening news, and by late evening, the other networks had jumped into the fray as well.

If arrogant government propagandists can stoop so low as to exploit the deaths of soldiers to score public opinion points, shouldn't we expect network executives to draw the line?

* * *

THE COLUMN on the "American Elephant" drew several heated reactions, most of them patronizing and sneering in tone. One even urged me to "go back to your usual civic/society issues," since apparently I am not qualified to write on political and military concerns.

But I had a good laugh from one correspondent, writing in Filipino, who jeered that I have no right to criticize the US and American policy because I often write about my travels to the United States. Apparently, to use his yardstick, if you visit a foreign country or have relatives living there and you write about enjoying its sights and people, then you have lost the right to criticize it. Even if its actions and policies directly affect my country?

Gimme a break, guys. I will write what I want in this space. And until you end up owning the INQUIRER or becoming my editors, you know what you can do with your instant and unthinking judgments.

Bolinao, Bolinao

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

BOLINAO is limestone country, and that's why cement makers coveted the place. Bolinao, the town, the land, sits on corals. It was once part of the rich, blue waters. From the womb of the sea it was born.

A part of us will die. This was the sad refrain of Bolinao residents in 1996 when their town and the sea that was their source of life and pride were threatened by the P13-billion cement plant to be constructed by a Taiwanese company and its Filipino and Japanese partners.

Six years later and with the giant threat gone, is a part of them dying now? Was the recent fish kill a portent of things to come?

The fight for the environment in 1996 was not confined within Bolinao, Pangasinan. It became a national and international issue, with world-renowned marine scientists joining the outcry to save Cape Bolinao from being entombed in cement. Included in the deadly project were limestone quarrying, dredging and widening of the channel in Barangay Guiguinawen to accommodate cargo ships, a 10-kilometer conveyor belt from quarry to plant site and massive extraction of ground water for the coal-fired power plant, etc. Bolinao would have been disemboweled.

Cape Bolinao is a rare spot on this planet. Why lay waste this Eden, this womb whence life springs, this bosom that nurtures millions of creatures? Bolinao was not the home of the UP Marine Science Institute for nothing.

So here was a huge foreign investment being shooed away by militant residents who were supposed to gain from the plant through jobs, improved public facilities and services, etc. The Bolinao folk stood their ground. Their cry: No to the cement plant.

The Ramos administration at that time was projecting itself as environment friendly. It helped that then First Lady Ming was a true greenie. But the cement plant had its backers, among them, Speaker Jose de Venecia.

Bolinao became a test case. I went to the place and later wrote a three-part series titled "Test Case for a Green President" and a couple of column pieces ("From womb to tomb").

It was a great fight. A do or die. Eventually, the cement plant backed off. And Bolinao was never the same again.

Businesswoman Margaret Celeste who led the protest was never the same woman again. Residents of this coastal town tasted victory in the end. They knew they could slay the giants.

A year later I returned to the place for a summer dip, to comb the beach, to get away. I couldn't help noticing the changes. People had put up beach houses for rent and were talking about ecotourism. Fish pens had sprouted and spread to as far as the eyes could see. In other words, with the industrial threat to the marine resources gone, people now invested in the fish business without fear.

I heard some worrisome comments about the unregulated building of resorts and the uncontrolled proliferation of fish pens. How much could Cape Bolinao take? But I also knew that a big environment scheme for the Lingayen Gulf in that area of Pangasinan was going to be put in place.

Now, what happened? Why the recent fish kill? What went wrong? Early this month, Inquirer Northern Luzon correspondent Yolanda Fuertes wrote an instructive piece about this tragedy. "A disaster waiting to happen," she said. The same thing happened in Binmaley and Dagupan, Fuertes added, and the Bolinaoans could have learned from them. But Bolinao officials and residents must have thought they would be spared. They were mistaken.

Three days ago, Fuertes wrote a follow-up story about Bolinaoans being hospitalized for allergies resulting from eating the dried fish suspected to have been part of the fish kill. The problem of Bolinao's uncontrolled aquaculture threatened not only the lives of the fish but of people as well.

There had been efforts to regulate aqua-culture and other activities related to marine life. Fuertes wrote that Mayor Jesus Celeste had formed a technical working group that would make a coastal development plan. This was composed of people from the local government, NGOs and the UPMSI. Approved in 1999, the plan classified the Bolinao waters into zones for ecotourism, fishery management, trade and navigational and multi-use zones. Fish pens and cages went into the multi-use zones.

Did this fail? The way things look, something went wrong somewhere. One can't have too much of a good thing. The fish catch from Bolinao waters was too good to be true and capitalists wanted more, more, more. Fish pens and cages proliferated dramatically. Until the waters could not take it anymore.

Last Feb. 1, Fuertes wrote, the bangus in the fish cages started to gasp for air and then floated dead. Some lucky operators harvested before their fish died, while many cried all the way to the bank. The cost of the death toll: about P400 million.

The scientists spoke. The Bolinao waters had too much organic load, dissolved oxygen was depleted. Fish feed boosted the growth of plankton that competed with the fish. Don't say we didn't warn you, the UP scientists who live and work right there in Bolinao could have said. Nature has a way of striking back in a deadly, dramatic way.

But it is not too late. Bolinao, the dream marine sanctuary, can still demonstrate to the world that things could be reversed. Bolinao residents had once battled the giants and emerged victorious. They now have to wage war against their own selves, against greed and forgetfulness. They had proven that they did not need a multi-billion industry in their town to improve their lives. The sea proved that to them and for them. But the sea also proved that there are limits to what one can take. Not everything is for the taking and taking over.

Bolinao should begin again.

Winter and spring

YOUNGBLOOD

Thomas-Patrick Pangilinan

*We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—**Ed.***

MY mother died this past winter of breast cancer—though technically that wasn't the cause of her death, of course. Technically, breast cancer victims die of complications such as the heart giving up or perhaps pneumonia. My mother died of some respiratory thing, technically. It may be said that she died because she stopped breathing. And now, I would like to start breathing myself, after having held my breath for four months.

Oddly I am wondering what to do in spring this year. Oddly I was thinking about my mother more as her condition deteriorated, and as she became less and less of her usual self. A mighty impressive disease—this cancer. It takes your breath away. The chemotherapy inflicts impressive shocks on the victim's system, and then, on the victim's relatives and loved ones, as it deadens feeling altogether.

Such fascinating stages. Initially there is a kind of troubled yet sweet awareness that the clock of the patient's mind is a few seconds off. Then an encroaching recognition of loss of function becomes less recognition and more loss. Eventually, the appetite goes away and the body deteriorates to turn the person into a shell of his old self. Soon words and phrases are looped, like mad lines from a post-modern play. Then there is less of that, less of everything, until the mind is concentrated on a curious stare.

Dead now, dead for months. I ought not to think about her. I should be concentrating on my reviewing for the GMAT and how to get into business school. I should be thinking about my soon-to-be-born daughter and how to raise her in such a complex, frightening world.

I should be thinking of spring and April, T.S. Elliot, taxes, Shakespeare, the Balikatan exercises, Jesus, the NBA playoffs and Sinatra singing "My Way." My mother used to sing that song while driving in the car.

But I am not really thinking about her. I am thinking about not thinking about her, and feeling both guilt and responsibility. I do not feel guilty about my actions. I did my filial duties, for the most part. I do not feel responsible. Cancer is not something you catch because you went outside in the rain without a hat.

I feel guilty for my inaction. For all the things that we should have said but never got around to saying. For all the things that we should have done but we never did. For all the things that we should have given but didn't. Feeling that if I had said and did these things, then perhaps I could have extended her life somehow.

The trouble is, I'm starting to forget certain things, save the shadow of memories, and even these have to be reconstructed willfully. I cried a few weeks ago when I could not remember her smell.

The thing about cancer is that if it lasts long enough, it takes away everything, not only by erasing the person you once knew but by erasing the you that you knew, too, leaving two carcasses. When the disease started getting bad, I used to tell myself that while I could make neither head nor tail of my mother's ravings, still she might have been clear as daylight to herself. When she succumbed into silence, I told myself that she might be harboring pleasant, unexpressed thoughts. Eventually I stopped kidding myself. What I saw was what I got: a blank stone in a wall eaten away by rain.

Which is very much what I am now. For the people around cancer victims, it is like second-hand smoke, and the worst thing about it is that after the long years, the one thought, the one thought that overwhelms all others—all the laughter, night long sessions of mahjong, the brassiness, the dancing, the quiet independent strength of her personality, her piano playing—is death.

And so she died. And it is spring. And because hope springs eternal, even if nothing else does, I am praying that my mother is somewhere up there, breathing again, where life is restored and the air and mind are clear.

Although she is dead, I still hope that she will be able to see her granddaughter being born. It would have given her the greatest joy to see her son's child and to realize her last dying wish. In this world, that one moment that was never to be.

My mother died and my daughter is about to be born. Winter is over and now it is spring.

Thomas-Patrick Pangilinan, 28, lives in San Antonio, Texas.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO...?

Valerio murder

JUN N. Valerio, government corporate counsel, was shot several times in front of his residence in Barangay Pinyahan, Quezon City on March 18, 2000. He was rushed to the St. Luke's Medical Center but did not survive.

The National Bureau of Investigation report said that Valerio's wife, Milagros, was behind the killing and that Valerio was killed because he was a hindrance to the illicit relationship of Milagros and SPO3 Antonio Cabador. The report named Martin Jimenez as the alleged gunman. Geronimo Quintana and Samuel Baran were tagged as accomplices.

Jimenez, Quintana and Baran were all arrested by the NBI. Milagros fled to Davao City but later surrendered voluntarily to the Region 11 Office of the PNP Criminal Investigation and Detection Group.

On June 28, 2000, the Department of Justice filed murder charges against Cabador, Jimenez, Baran and Quintana. Milagros was charged with parricide. The cases were assigned to Judge Jaime Salazar of the Quezon City RTC Branch 103.

After the Supreme Court issued a circular designating Branch 103 as a special court for drug cases, the case was transferred to Branch 81, a special criminal court presided by Judge Teresa Yadao.

All the detained accused pleaded not guilty during their arraignment on April 16, 2002. Milagros asked the Supreme Court to issue a temporary restraining order on the case but the Court dismissed it on July 2. She moved for reconsideration but the Court denied it with finality on Sept. 26.

On Nov. 9, 2001, Cabador was arrested by the NBI in Mindanao. He fought with the arresting officers and was wounded. After his treatment in a hospital, he was immediately transferred to the Quezon City Jail. He pleaded guilty when arraigned last Jan. 8.

Case status: The court is set to release its resolution on the motion to discharge Baran and turn him into a state witness. Jimenez, Baran, Quintana and Cabador are detained at the Quezon City Jail. Milagros is at the CIDG Detention Center in Camp Crame.

Armin P. Adina, PDI Research Department

A great mind and fearless fighter for freedom

IT is a pity that the recent demise of a great Filipino was not highlighted by the mass media, the very institution which benefited from his fervent and steadfast defense of freedom, particularly the freedom of the press. I am referring to lawyer Ramon A. Gonzales.

His career path, his writings and the causes he espoused, clearly projected a great mind, a fervent nationalist and a courageous freedom fighter. He was one of the few Filipinos who never blinked in the face of the blandishments and suppression perpetrated by the Marcos authoritarian regime.

In the early years of martial law, particularly during the series of referenda aimed at propping up the draconian martial rule, Gonzales went around campuses exposing the evils brought about by authoritarianism as experienced by Latin American countries otherwise known as "banana republics." His courageous speech about freedom in 1973 at the UP Iloilo campus inspired this writer, then a sophomore college student, to lead the petition for the restoration of the official student publication.

In 1974, UP Iloilo had the distinction of being the first in Visayas and Mindanao to have a restored school paper under the martial law regime, thanks to the prompt response of UP President Salvador P. Lopez to our petition.

A few years ago, the prestigious Philippine Bar Association paid tribute to Gonzales for his valuable contributions in the enrichment of Philippine jurisprudence in recognition of his having filed the most number of cases in the Supreme Court which led to landmark decisions in Gonzales v. Comelec (927 SCRA 835), Gonzales v. Alvares (L-19072, Aug. 14, 1964), Gonzales v. Secretary of Labor (94 Phil. 325), Gonzales v. Enrile (G.R. No. L-22730, May 24, 1967), Gonzales v. Aldama (G.R. No. L-15144, May 16, 1960), Gonzales v. Marcos (65 SCRA 624), In Re Gonzales (160 SCRA 771) Gonzales vs. The National Treasurer and Comelec (G.R. No. 56404), Gonzales vs. Comelec (21 SCRA 774), among others.

Gonzales was also one of the very few lawyers who defended Ninoy Aquino before the military tribunals, and one of the very few Constitutional Convention delegates who refused to sign the 1973 Marcos Constitution.

—EDWARD B. CONTRERAS, executive judge, Roxas City Trial Court

Government is bigger problem for OFWs

WHILE it is laudable that the Department of Labor and Employment has been cracking down on illegal recruiters, we point out that this does not mean that overseas Filipino workers are now less vulnerable to abuse and exploitation.

Under the new DOLE regulations, the increases in capital, cash bond and escrow account do little to assure us that OFWs will really be better protected. In our experience, the heart-wrenching situation of migrant workers is due more to the entire framework of the Philippine government's labor export program than to who sent them abroad. Dirty, difficult and dangerous—those are the types of work our migrant workers end up with.

The Philippine government exports workers to handle jobs that nationals of foreign countries do not want. That is why there is a demand for migrant workers in the first place. Local workers do not want to work as domestic helpers, factory workers, seamen and even nurses, because the wages are low, the workload is high and the abuse is great.

Another major factor that causes migrants and their families many sleepless nights is the pain of being separated from their loved ones. The emotional pain is in addition to the very real problems that come up when spouses live thousands of miles apart or parents are separated from their children and entire families are displaced because of the lack of viable jobs in the Philippines.

These are the main problems when the government adopts as a policy systematically exporting 2,400 migrant workers per day. In our view, the new DOLE rules for recruitment agencies do not address these fundamental issues.

While it is true that illegal recruiters unjustly reap profits from migrant workers by exacting high placement fees or by not sending them abroad as promised, we must point out that the Philippine government reaps even greater profits. For example, the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration exacts $25 from each migrant workers as a forced membership fee. With President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo pledging to ship one million workers abroad by year's end, this means that the government will rake in about P1.25 billion from this exaction alone!

And given that President Macapagal seeks to increase further the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency's monopoly on the export of workers, her administration is mainly to blame for the woes of thousands of overseas Filipinos.

While the government must go after those who consciously exploit migrant workers, in addition to illegal recruiters, the government should also crack down on itself.

—POE M. GRATELA, secretary general, Research, Documentation and Publication-Migrante, rdpmig@nsclub.net

Bringing down a good man

THE DIFFICULTY Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho is encountering in having his appointment confirmed by Congress raises two questions: (1) What are the factual reasons for this difficulty? (2) Why is Congress involved in the process at all?

The latter is the larger issue that should be discussed. Congress and the executive are independent bodies. The President should be allowed to appoint who she likes in the same way as Congress can choose who it likes to head committees, etc. I understand the confirmation system is based on the American model and is in the Constitution. But this could well be one of the issues to be reconsidered when the Constitution is finally reviewed.

If the administration, or anyone in it, fails at his job, Congress can complain to the President and suggest changes.

In the case of Camacho, the role of Congress, as I understand it, is to ensure that the person has the qualifications, competence and integrity for the job. In this regard, Camacho has shown himself eminently qualified for the job. He kept the budget deficit down (a very difficult thing to do in the trying times of 2001). He has already raised 80 percent of the foreign funds needed to help bridge this year's deficit. The Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Bureau of Customs have attained their revenue targets. And the foreign business community is encouraged by the stability and competence he has brought to the post.

Yet, Camacho's confirmation is being blocked for what can only be political reasons.

The Philippines has enough problems to overcome without getting rid of a good man.

Those who are blocking his confirmation may wish to reconsider their position in the wider interests of the country.

—PETER WALLACE, president, The Wallace Business Forum, 14th Floor, Sagittarius Bldg., H.V. dela Costa St., Salcedo Village, Makati City

Whose interests will US troops advance?

WE write as participants of the 18th Annual Conference of the Philippine International Forum (PIF) whose theme is "World at War: Implications for the Philippines."

We are citizens of Australia, Belgium, Canada, England, Ireland, the Netherlands, Peru and the United States living in the Philippines. We work with peasants, indigenous peoples, Moro peoples. We are workers and professionals involved in church work, community development, education, environment, health, human rights and theater. Many of us live and work in various parts of Mindanao; others in Visayas and Luzon.

We support the Filipino people's—Lumad, Moros and Christians—prolonged efforts and deep desire for self-determination, genuine national sovereignty and lasting peace based on justice. Because of this, we strongly question and oppose the entry of US troops into the Philippines in the guise of war games and exercises.

We condemn any form of terrorism from whatever source, and sympathize with all victims of kidnapping, criminal acts and war.

Philippine sovereignty is clearly being violated by the unconstitutional deployment of US troops in Mindanao and elsewhere in the country. Since the Philippines has become a second home to us, it pains and disturbs us to see an internal problem being projected as a target of the United States' "war on terrorism."

The entry of US troops, their war materials and budget, will escalate militarization here. The spiral of violence will increase. We have to seriously question whose interests these troops, budget and weapons will protect.

Peace can be achieved only by meeting the most basic aspirations and needs of the Filipino people: by addressing widespread poverty, landlessness and gross exploitation of natural and human resources.

—WITH 27 SIGNATORIES, participants, The 18th Annual Conference of the Philippine International Forum

LETTERS PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

NBI used to intimidate a man of God

BASED on footage shown in the regular telecast of "The Correspondents," it was extremely sickening to see National Bureau of Investigation agents serving a warrant of arrest for libel on Brother Eli F. Soriano of Dating Daan at 3 a.m. of Feb. 2, 2002, at his compound in Apalit, Pampanga. The overbearing display of grenade launchers as well as high-powered guns in serving a simple arrest warrant has brought shame and ridicule to the whole NBI. The tarnished image of the NBI in the eyes of many peace-loving people is now almost beyond repair, and President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo will have to order a top to bottom investigation to weed out bad elements from this agency to salvage whatever is worth saving.

As taxpayers, we cannot imagine the NBI allowing itself to be used by certain vested interests as a tool for intimidating and harassing God-fearing people, like Soriano. If this kind of oppression can be easily inflicted on a man of God, how much more on ordinary mortals like us? It is very frightening to think that the officers and men who are being paid with our taxes and mandated by the government to protect the citizenry seem to be the ones sowing fear and confusion among the people.

We suggest that the Office of the President look into this incident to prevent an outburst from the supporters of Soriano nationwide who are boiling with anger.

—BIENVENIDO R. MERCADO, ROY GALANG, Unit 9, ABM Townhouse, Crestview Heights, Antipolo City

Wrong name and position

THIS is in reaction to the news report, titled "Eastern Visayas near self-sufficiency in rice, says exec regional agriculture" written by Joey A. Gabieta of the PDI Visayas Bureau last Feb. 15.

We appreciate the fact that the story was published in your paper, but we would like to correct two basic errors in the article.

First, the name of the regional executive director of the Department of Agriculture Regional Field Office 8 is Leo P. Cañeda, not Leo Cajeda.

Second, his official position title is regional executive director.

—VIRGINIA S. MACANDA, regional information officer, Department of Agriculture, Regional Field Unit 8, Kanhuraw Hill, Tacloban City

Two mosques

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

THERE couldn't have been a more striking study in contrasts. Officials of Tangub City in Mindanao held a referendum last week asking residents if the city council should grant a building permit for a local Muslim organization to build an Islamic center and a mosque. The results were overwhelming: 50,111 denying both requests versus 375 agreeing to both proposals.

Meanwhile, up north in Baguio City, the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) announced, also last week, that it was donating a 400-meter lot within the campus to build a P13-million mosque.

There is irony in these two cases: a military academy that trains elite officers who might end up fighting Muslim rebels in Mindanao turns out to be more understanding than civilians, in this case the residents of Tangub City.

There are several issues that need to be discussed here. The first is that of religious freedom, a constitutional right all too often violated in our predominantly Catholic country.

But there is more to the Tangub case than religious freedom. We keep talking about building a "civil society," forgetting that the bedrock of such a society is cultural and religious pluralism, one where no minority is too small, too insignificant. Note that the PMA only has 10 Muslim cadets, but saw it fit to build a mosque.

The PMA's Commandant for Cadets, Col. Ben Dolorfino, rightly points out that a mosque is not just a place of worship. A mosque is important to help cadets—Muslim or not—understand Muslim culture, which is why the mosque will include an Islamic library.

In a way, I cannot blame Tangub's residents for reacting the way they did. Years of a self-imposed religious apartheid system have blocked Muslim-Christian dialogue. Denying Muslims their right to a place of worship only widens this gap because it keeps Muslims invisible, strange, even dangerous.

This takes us to the impact of the denial of a mosque in Tangub on the Muslim population. It is precisely this kind of discrimination that radicalizes Muslims, driving them to fundamentalist Islamicist ideologies. Imagine young Muslims growing up asking why they don't have their own place to worship in, and learning that Christians went to the polls in reaction to their request for a building permit, and voted down their appeal.

Prof. Julkipli Wadi of the UP Institute of Islamic Studies gave a talk last week at the university where he pointed out the need to go beyond poverty as an explanation for Islamicist radicalism. Wadi notes that most of the suicide commandos who attacked the World Trade Center in New York were citizens of Saudi Arabia, hardly a poor country. Wadi's point is well made—many of these radical Islamicists had in fact studied in Europe and the United States. They were not impoverished Afghan peasants; these were middle class or, as in the case of Osama bin Laden, quite wealthy.

Wadi talks about the "unarticulated" reasons for radicalism. In sociological terms, I was thinking of alienation from the social mainstream. Think again of our young Muslims without a mosque, and seeing themselves demonized in the media (especially with the government's video showing the Abu Sayyaf beheading soldiers).

As alienation intensifies, the marginalized search for an identity, drifting toward radical fundamentalist ideologies where the "axis of evil" is now composed of those Christians who won't let you build a mosque, and the Kano soldiers who come in for "war games."

There are now Muslim communities all over the country, in our major urban centers. Some Christians find this threatening, even fretting that Muslims might take over the country. I see the migrant communities as a challenge for Muslims and Christians to overcome the ignorance that stokes fear and hatred. Mind you, the solution is not "integration" in the sense of Muslims being absorbed into the majority Christian culture. The true test of social cohesion comes when people have space to practice their own religion, to create their own culture.

The tale of Tangub and the PMA is that of two mosques, one that will rise soon, the other perhaps remaining an elusive dream. It is not just the Muslims of Tangub who suffer. Without that mosque, we are all poorer as a people, as a nation.

* * *

Comments to miguel@pinoykasi.net

Has Agent Orange been used in Basilan?

WE are very much disturbed by a recent news report (PDI, 2/12/02, Page A17) about an outbreak of skin disease in some towns in Basilan. Doctors Huda Lim and Raniel Mon have reported that children and adults are affected by a "highly infections" skin disease of "unknown cause."

It was reported that some patients have not been improving despite antibiotics and other medications. The cases were first detected in Sumisip and Maluso in Basilan, the same places where bombs have been dropped by military planes. One of the doctors said that this outbreak may be an "aftermath of air strikes by the military two years ago on Abu Sayyaf lairs." There is a suspicion that the military might have used chemicals during the military operations against the Abu Sayyaf.

These cases make us ask: Was Agent Orange (which caused disease and the destruction of the environment in Vietnam) used in Basilan? What protection do we have for the civilians in the area?

We hope that the President, the Department of Health and the Department of National Defense will look into these reports and assess the people's health needs and find out what is causing the problem. Hopefully, mechanisms will be put in place to protect the civilians.

This is most urgent, considering that the military operations to pursue the Abu Sayyaf include the use of bombs. Bombs do not discriminate. Again, we reiterate our position that any action to bring criminals to justice should consider the safety of civilians. Otherwise we will end up having more needless and senseless deaths in the fight against kidnappings.

—AURORA A. PARONG, M.D., executive director, Task force Detainees of the Philippines, 19 Malingap St., Teachers Village, Quezon City

Dangerous comedy acts

I WAS amused when I heard that in an effort to offer good, clean entertainment to visiting US troops, we will be hiring local comedians.

I'm just wondering what kind of show our comedians will put on for the Americans. Will they offer their usual fare? You know what I mean: wearing bizarre costumes and acting like gay persons, mugging and screaming jokes about: (a) sexual orientation; (b) physical characteristics; and (c) bodily functions—all delivered in exaggerated carabao English.

If so, I suggest installing anti-grenade screens in front of the stage.

—FRANCIS BERNARDO, 335 Masikap St., Tondo, Manila

Delayed posting of SSS contribution

MY problem is the much-delayed posting of my premium contribution to the Social Security System. On Oct. 19, 2001, I paid my premium contribution for the month of October at the Veterans Bank branch in Lingayen, Pangasinan. On Jan. 28, 2002, I inquired at the SSS branch in Dagupan City whether my payment had already been posted. An SSS personnel checked on the computer and it appeared that my October payment had not yet been posted at the main office. Because of this, the Dagupan City SSS branch did not entertain my application for pension benefits.

On Aug. 21, 2001, the SSS placed a one-page advertisement in the INQUIRER to commemorate its 44th anniversary. In that advertisement was a blurb that said: "Faced with a large number of clients and millions of transactions completed every week, the SSS makes full use of the latest technology to enable it to deliver prompt and efficient service at all times. Internet Technology also enables the SSS to systematize and hasten the collection and posting of its members' contributions."

Is a six-month period before posting of an SSS contribution the norm? Isn't that a manifest contravention of the claims in its blurb?

If up to now my October premium contribution has not yet been posted, how much longer will I suffer before I can enjoy my pension benefits?

My SSS No. is 03-13471025.

—JOSE M. PASTORIN JR., G. Zaratan Street, Pogomboa, Aguilar, Pangasinan

The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Bush to N. Korea: Free your people

BUSH gazes out at North Korea from Observation Point Oullette in the Demilitarized Zone. AP

DORASAN, South Korea—US President George W. Bush Wednesday urged North Korea to open a way through the world's last Cold War frontier and sit down for talks on its feared missile program.

But Bush kept up his tough stand on Pyongyang accusing the "despotic regime" of creating a prison for its 20 million people, as he was due to get his first glimpse of the isolated Stalinist state.

"I'm troubled by a regime that tolerates starvation. I worry about a regime that is closed and not transparent. I'm deeply concerned about the people of North Korea," he said at a press conference in Seoul.

He later headed with South Korean President Kim Dae-jung to the last stop on Unification Railway on the South Korean side of the Demilitarised Zone, which has divided the Korean peninsula since the 1950-1953 Korean War ended with a ceasefire but no peace treaty.

"People on both sides of this border want to live in freedom and dignity, without the threat of violence and famine and war," Bush said at Dorasan station.

"I hope that one day soon this hope will be realized. And when the day comes, all the people of Korea will find in America a strong and willing friend."

His comments came as it later emerged that an Army corporal had become the first North Korean to defect across the DMZ to the South in several years, hours before Bush visited the spot.

Although Bush did not repeat his controversial comments accusing Pyongyang of being part of an "axis of evil" with Iran and Iraq, he made it clear he still believed it to be a threat to global peace.

"We must not permit the world's most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world's most dangerous weapons," declared Bush, who has dubbed the heavily fortified DMZ "the most dangerous place on earth."

"We're prepared to talk with the North about steps that will lead to a better future, a future that is more hopeful and less threatening. But like this road left unbuilt, our offer has gone unanswered," he said.

"The North should finish it," he said. While both sides agreed to restore rail and highway ties after a June 2000 summit, the North has not yet begun construction on its side even though the South has nearly completed its portion.

Washington maintains some 37,000 troops in South Korea, and Bush said it was in everyone's interest to ensure that peace was restored on the peninsula in voicing strong support for Kim Dae-jung's "Sunshine Policy" aimed at ending the North's isolation.

"I will not change my opinion of (North Korean leader) Kim Jong-il until he frees his people and accepts genuine proposals (for peace) from countries like South Korea," Bush added.

"We are peaceful people. We have no intention of invading North Korea. South Korea has no intention of invading North Korea," Bush said. *AFP*

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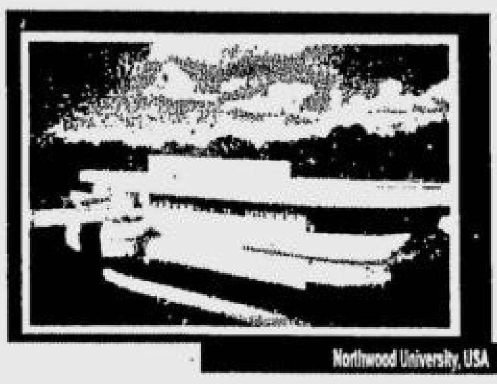

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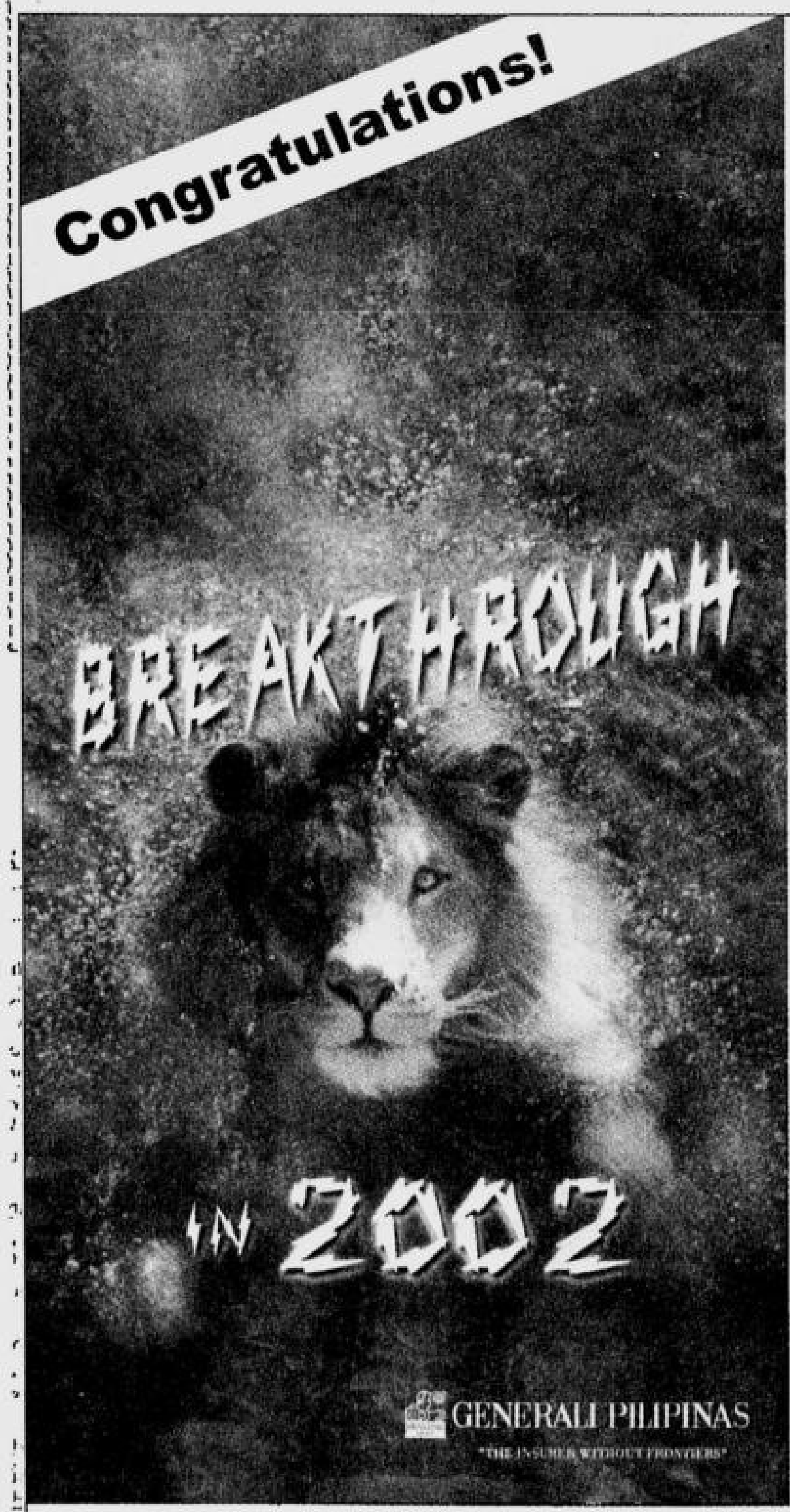

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Japan runs out of money for WW II sex slaves

TOKYO—A government-backed fund for World War II sex slaves extended the payment period Wednesday for South Korean women corralled into brothels for the Imperial Japanese Army, but organizers admitted compensation was likely to fall short of initial goals.

The Asian Women's Fund, set up in 1995 with government support but paid with private donations, had originally identified some 350 women in South Korea, Taiwan and the Philippines as eligible for payments of two million yen ($15,000) each.

Yet the latest figures available show only 188 wartime "comfort women"—as they were euphemistically called—had accepted the money as of last August.

Many have angrily rejected the offer saying it contains no official apology and glosses over the Japanese government's responsibility.

Fund spokesperson Mizuho Matsuda said the number of women receiving payments was likely to climb over the next couple months but not enough to reach the original target.

"You can't judge it a failure or success by the numbers," she said. "Even if just one person accepts, it's meaningful."

The number of beneficiaries was low, in large part because South Korean victims had been holding out for direct compensation from the Japanese government, she said. **AP**

Train fire kills 215 in Egypt

AYYAT, Egypt—A passenger train crowded with Egyptians leaving the capital for a holiday weekend caught fire as it headed south early Wednesday, killing 215 people, police said.

The death toll, earlier reported at 100, rose as rescuers searched charred train cars Wednesday hours after the fire broke out. Egypt's Middle East New Agency reported the cause of the fire was a burst gas cylinder using for cooking in the train café.

Each car designed to accommodate about 150 passengers was crammed with some 300 passengers, police said, meaning more than 3,000 people were aboard.

Police said the fire broke out about 2 a.m. in one of the 11 cars of the morning train from Cairo to Luxor, about 480 km south, sometime after the train left Cairo just after midnight. Several other cars caught fire and the train traveled in flames for 7 km before finally stopping near Ayyat, 75 km south of Cairo.

The flames were put out hours later in Ayyat. In addition to the dead, 65 people were being treated for injuries, police said.

Said Fuad Amin, a 22-year-old construction worker, jumped from the burning train and was being treated for a broken hand and a suspected concussion in Ayyat Hospital. He said the train was so full he and six friends had been unable to get seats and were sitting on the floor. The first sign of trouble, he said, were shouts and screams he at first attributed to a fight.

Then he saw flames and people running, including a woman whose clothes were on fire.

"People were running like crazy," he said, his voice weak. Amin ran, too, until he found a window broken open. He hesitated at first because the train was moving fast.

"I thought I was going to die anyway, so I jumped," he said. It was the last thing he remembered before waking in the hospital.

Crying, he said he did not know what happened to friends with whom he had been traveling to spend the holiday with their families in southern Egypt.

Many of the passengers were going to their home villages for Eid al-Adha, or the "Feast of the Sacrifice," a four-day holiday that starts Friday. The holiday commemorating God's provision of a ram to substitute for Abraham's impending sacrifice of his son is regarded as the most important feast in the Islamic calendar.

Adel Hassan Fadlallah, a 21-year-old laundry worker being treated at Ayyat Hospital, recalled his car filling quickly with smoke.

Panicked passengers tried to run but stumbled into each other. He also jumped from a window and suffered wounds to his head and hands.

Some people were killed as they jumped from the burning, speeding train. Other bodies were recovered inside the train.

Doctors at Ayyat Hospital, the main hospital in the area, said they were sending serious burn and other cases beyond their capabilities to Cairo. The hospital morgue was full and turned away ambulances carrying the dead at midmorning Wednesday. **AP**

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WORLDBRIEFS

Disgruntled German

FREISING, Germany—A disgruntled young German wearing Army camouflage shot and killed two former bosses at a company that recently fired him, then sprayed gunfire and set off two homemade pipe bombs at his old high school Tuesday, killing the principal and injuring several other people, police said. More than 400 students hustled out of the school complex in a Munich suburb in the early morning chill after someone set off fire alarm. Police later evacuated about 25 students and two teachers who had holed up in classrooms while police commandos searched for the suspected assailant, who was later found dead in the school. Police said he killed himself. School shootings are extremely rare in Germany, and officials expressed shock at the explosion of violence. **AP**

17 dead in hailstorm

LA PAZ, Bolivia—A massive hailstorm has killed at least 14 people and wounded more than 120 in this South American capital, said Fire Department chief Rolando Buscara. More than 100 cars were destroyed or severely damaged in the downtown area Tuesday. The city's General Hospital said the number of victims would probably grow. The rains, which begun about 3 P.M, turned the main street of La Paz into a muddy river. **AP**

Milosevic complaint

THE HAGUE—Slobodan Milosevic complained Wednesday his wife had been denied a visa for a weekend visit during his trial, as more prosecution witnesses stood ready to testify the former Yugoslav president masterminded a campaign of war crimes in the Balkans. Milosevic asked the three judges of the UN tribunal to intervene with prison authorities and the Dutch government to allow his wife, Mira Markovic, into the country. "I consider this to be part of my physical mistreatment," he said. Markovic has been granted regular short-term visas since last July, and has visited him nearly once a month at the UN detention center in The Hague suburb of Scheveningen. **AP**

Handed to prosecutors

JAKARTA—Indonesian police Wednesday transferred a handcuffed Tommy Suharto, the youngest son of the former dictator, to state prosecutors after wrapping up an investigation into claims he ordered a judge's murder and possessed a cache of arms and explosives. Tommy was taken in a 12-vehicle convoy, including a truckload of armed police, from Jakarta police headquarters to the attorney general's Jakarta branch office. He smiled but made no comment as he walked inside accompanied by guards. **AFP**

State terrorism

UNITED NATIONS—Calling itself "the foremost victim of terrorism," Iraq accused the United States in a report released Tuesday of being a key perpetrator by conducting a campaign of "state terrorism" to topple Saddam Hussein. The Iraqi government used a report to the United Nations on what it is doing to combat terrorism to focus instead on the "terrorists" it says are trained, armed and financed by states to infiltrate the country and attack its leaders, officials and citizens. In the report, Baghdad singled out the United States which it said "openly spends tens of millions of dollars on troops of mercenaries to carry out terrorist operations against Iraq." He referred to the Iraq Liberation Act, passed by the US Congress during the Clinton administration in 1998, which authorizes the Pentagon to provide Saddam's opponents with up to dlrs 97 million in arms and military training. US President George W. Bush remains committed to ending Saddam's dictatorial regime and eliminating Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. **AP**

Disinformation

WASHINGTON—A developing Pentagon campaign to influence public opinion in both hostile and friendly countries could include planting false information and result in those lies getting back to Americans, critics worry. "Anything they spread overseas will come back here, because information travels so quickly," said Shibley Telhami, a Middle East specialist at the Brookings Institution. "Our own population will then hear it and believe it. It will affect our decisions." The proposal by the Pentagon's Office of Strategic Influence, part of efforts to promote the war against terrorism, reflects a Bush administration worry that the United States lacks strong public support overseas, especially among Muslims who believe the United States is hostile toward Islam. **AP**

14 Palestinians killed in Israeli reprisals

JERUSALEM—Firing missiles, tank shells and machine guns at Palestinian Authority positions, Israeli troops killed 14 Palestinians on Wednesday in reprisal for a Palestinian shooting ambush on a West Bank roadblock that left six Israeli soldiers dead—one of the deadliest attacks on Israeli troops in 17 months of fighting.

The six soldiers were killed at close range by militiamen linked to Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's Fatah movement. The ambush ignited debate on the military's tactics, including the effectiveness of checkpoints, and intensified pressure on Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to take more decisive action in stopping Palestinian attacks.

"It's clear that the strategy that we've had until now can't continue," said the Israeli president, Moshe Katsav.

Israel's security Cabinet met Wednesday to decide on the scope of retaliation. Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, an advocate of restraint, canceled a trip to Madrid to participate in the session.

In a first response, Israeli warplanes and helicopter gunships attacked Arafat's seaside compound in Gaza City and his headquarters in the West Bank town of Ramallah. Arafat remained in his Ramallah office, the lights turned off and accompanied by a few close aides, said one of his advisers, Ahmed Abel Rahman.

In all, 14 Palestinians were killed: four in a missile attack on Arafat's Gaza compound, six in Israeli shelling of two Palestinian police checkpoints near the West Bank town of Nablus, two in a firefight outside the Balata refugee camp close to Nablus, one in an air strike on a Palestinian police post in the town of Ramallah, and one in a firefight near Ramallah.

Eleven of the dead were Palestinian policemen.

Abdel Rahman said the Palestinians had a right to fight the Israeli occupation, implying support for the ambush on the Israeli soldiers.

"The Palestinian people have a legitimate right to resist, which will not stop without ending the occupation," Abdel Rahman said, adding that the Palestinian Authority remained opposed to attacks in Israel.

The past week has been one of the bloodiest since fighting began in September 2000. Fifteen Israelis were killed, including 11 soldiers, a policeman and three civilians. In the same period, 45 Palestinians were killed, including nine civilians, 22 members of the security forces and 12 assailants and suspected militants.

The ambush on the soldiers was carried out at about 9 p.m. Tuesday at an Israeli military checkpoint near the village of Ein Arik, west of Ramallah. The post was manned by eight soldiers who had arrived for a tour of duty just several hours earlier.

Israeli media reports said the Palestinian gunmen apparently had carefully watched the checkpoint and were aware of the changeover.

Two or three gunmen approached the checkpoint from a dirt path and opened fire, taking the soldiers by surprise. Five soldiers were killed on the road and a sixth in a nearby trailer that served as shelter for the troops. Another soldier in the trailer was wounded.

A soldier in a lookout position was unharmed, the reports said.

A Fatah leader in the West Bank, Marwan Barghouti, was quoted as saying that the ambush was one of the Palestinians' "most successful" operations. The Al Aqsa Brigades, a Fatah-affiliated militia, claimed responsibility.

Israeli military commentators sharply criticized the Army's performance. "In the killing fields of the intefadeh (Arabic for Palestinian uprising), Israeli soldiers have gone from being the hunters to being hunted. Sitting ducks," wrote commentator Alex Fishman in the Yediot Ahronot daily.

In the Haaretz daily, commentator Zeev Schiff wrote that the incident raised serious questions "about the very existence of the checkpoints and about the need for an overall strategy."

Israeli reprisals began around 3 a.m. Wednesday.

In the Gaza Strip, Israeli F-16 warplanes bombed a four-story police compound, sending debris and shrapnel flying in all directions.

For the first time in 17 months, Israel attacked Arafat's seaside compound. Warships fired missiles at the complex, punching holes into one of the walls, shattering windows and killing four security guards.

Palestinians in nearby buildings fled in panic. Carrying her 9-month-old baby, with her 3-year-old son behind her, Ilham Johfur, 26, said: "This is another night of terror." Hundreds of people were in the streets, fearing their buildings would be hit. **AP**

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Army pushes offensive, turns down MILF offer

PALEMBANG, Sultan Kudarat--A top military official in Central Mindanao rejected the offer of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) to help secure the safe release of kidnap victims Korean Jae Keon Yoon and Filipino Carlos Belonio.

Maj. Gen. Roy Kyamko, chief of the Army's 6th Infantry Division, on Monday said the military's manhunt operation will continue without let up to pressure the kidnappers to free their hostages.

Kyamko did not set a timetable, but he gave assurances that government troops were trying their best to rescue the two victims.

Earlier, the MILF sent an emissary identified as Mike Macmod to talk to Tigre Jakiri, commander of the MILF's 204th Bangsamoro Islamic Armed Forces (BIAF) Brigade.

Jakiri was one of the suspects in the Feb. 6 kidnapping of the two.

Jakiri, another MILF military leader Commander Salem Gogo Piana, a certain Datu Dido and six unidentified men are facing kidnapping and serious illegal detention charges before a local court here.

The MILF emissary went home empty-handed after he failed to penetrate Jakiri's jungle base in Sitio Linikas in Barangay Molon here due to military operation.

Macmod claimed that the military rescue operation is hampering the MILF's efforts to secure the immediate release of the kidnap victims.

The suspects earlier threatened to kill their hostages if the manhunt operation against them continues.

"If they (kidnappers) kill the hostages, well that's part of the risk. We should not allow ourselves to be terrorized by this group. This is the reason we prefer manhunt and rescue operation over negotiations," Kyamko said.

He said the military has no business interfering if the MILF wants to send an emissary to help facilitate the safe release of the victims.

"Let them (MILF) do their thing. But our directive is to continue the manhunt operation," Kyamko said.

He said that Vice Mayor Blah Dipatuan of Palembang has personally offered to serve as a guide for government troops involved in the search and rescue operation.

With the help of the vice mayor, Kyamko said, they are very optimistic that their rescue efforts would yield positive results.

The military has established a tactical command post in Milbuk, a seaside village in this town.

The Army is taking the lead in the rescue operations, scouring terrain and jungle in Sitio Nonongan, Barangay Molon, where the group of Commander Jakiri has reportedly set up a new camp.

Civilian assets in Sitio Nonongan reportedly informed the military that the group of Jakiri was sighted in the area.

Col. Pedrito Magsino, 601st Brigade chief, disclosed that the two victims already refused to cooperate with their captors.

"The hostages are reportedly suffering from over-fatigue. They were put in a carabao-driven sled as the suspects run from one hiding place to another," Magsino said.

Meanwhile, Magsino branded as a blatant lie, the reported abuses committed by his men against some Muslim civilians during clearing operations in Barangays Butril, Kabuling and Lebua.

"Our soldiers are graduates of a one-month crash course in humanitarian laws and human rights. The reports are lies, biased and baseless. All these were intended to discredit the troops involved in the operation," Magsino said.

He claimed that they conducted clearing operations on Feb. 9 and 10 in Barangays Lebua, Kabuling and Butril in Palembang, and Barangay Piñol in Maasim, Sarangani after receiving intelligence reports that the houses of some residents were used as sanctuaries of the suspects.

But Magsino said the suspects fled on foot before the Army troops arrived.

In Maasim, Sarangani, the Army recovered from the house of a certain Muslimen Maulana shabu paraphernalia and a Carbine rifle.

Maulana was able to escape before the raiding team arrived.

In Barangay Kabuling, soldiers recovered assorted firearms.

"Those (recovered firearms) were proof that there were lawless elements in the area," Magsino said. ***Aquiles Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

HAPPINESS

BEN MOSES EBREO

The joy which his work portrays doesn't seem to have any effect on this wood carver in Ifugao province who has to finish several statues to meet a deadline.

Bishops meet GMA today on pact with ex-NPAs

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—Two Catholic bishops have joined the appeal of their counterparts on Negros Island for President Macapagal-Arroyo to heed the call for "real peace."

Archbishop of Jaro Angel Lagdameo and Marbel Bishop Dinualdo Gutierrez, head of the Episcopal Commission on Social Action of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, were referring to the clamor to include the proposed supplementary agreement to the original peace pact between the government and the breakaway communist faction RPA-ABB.

The proposed agreement, which was drafted by the multisectoral group Peace Advocates in Negros, seeks to correct the "ambiguous and contentious provisions" in a peace agreement signed by the then Estrada administration and the Rebolusyonaryong Partido ng Manggagawa/Revolutionary Proletarian Army-Alex Boncayao Brigade on Dec. 10, 2000.

Proposals

The PAN had submitted to Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Eduardo Ermita the supplemental agreement that was drawn up during a Catholic Church-backed Negros Peace Forum held here in December.

The PAN members and Bacolod Bishop Vicente Navarra, Dumaguete Bishop John Du, San Carlos Bishop Jose Advincula and Msgr. Rogelio Cruz, administrator of the Diocese of Kabankalan, are scheduled to meet President Macapagal today in Malacañang to discuss their concerns on the original peace pact.

In his letter to President Macapagal on Tuesday, Lagdameo expressed his "fraternal solidarity" with the appeal of four Negros bishops for the government to adopt the supplementary agreement.

"We should increase the number of partners who will wage and work for peace, not through the barrel of the gun, but through responsive and genuine development of people," Lagdameo wrote.

Consciousness

Gutierrez, for his part, said he joined the four Negros prelates "in their collective effort to raise public national consciousness about the need to pursue a just and enduring peace in the country."

He added that he was one with the bishops in calling on the government to seriously work for peace and not to simply use a "hastily crafted and deeply flawed" peace agreement with the RPM-P/RPA-ABB as a way of ending an insurgency.

"Such agreement can only result in more sufferings to our brothers and sisters in the countryside," Gutierrez said.

He appealed to Ms Macapagal to heed the people's aspirations for 'real and lasting peace, for authentic integral human development and for prosperity and happiness."

Transport board chief says he wasn't arrested

SAN FERNANDO CITY—The chief of the Land Transportation and Franchising Regulatory Board in Ilocos denied reports that he was arrested by National Bureau of Investigation agents here on charges of accepting bribe from a bus operator.

In a letter to the INQUIRER, LTFRB regional director Bruno Patricio, said he was only invited for questioning by the NBI agents after the agents "found money on the sheath of documents on his table."

But NBI agent Max Salvador, head of the arresting team, debunked Patricio's claims, insisting that they conducted an entrapment operation against the LTFRB chief.

"Patricio was caught with the bribe money. The money was under his control and it does not matter whether he received or pocketed it," Salvador said.

"Patricio posted a cash bond for his temporary liberty, which means he was arrested."

He said his office would still pursue the case even if Ireneo Laurean, a bus operator from Binalonan, Pangasinan, filed an affidavit of desistance.

"We have other witnesses," Salvador said, adding that Laurean's previous allegations stand and his affidavit has not negated them.

The documents found in Patricio's table were Laurean's franchise application. Last Feb. 7, Laurean filed a complaint with the NBI alleging that Patricio was demanding P2,000 for the approval of his application.

"I never received or accepted or pocketed the money," Patricio insisted in his letter, quoting sworn statements made by Laurean and the arresting NBI agents.

To prove his innocence, Patricio presented several documents to the INQUIRER, including an affidavit of desistance of Laurean last Feb. 13.

In his affidavit, Laurean said the "complaint arose from misunderstanding and miscalculation of facts."

He said he was no longer interested in pursuing the case against Patricio and moved for its dismissal. ***Peter La. Julian, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

Ilocos school enters 'big league' of supercomputers

By Gia Damaso Dumo
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

SAN FERNANDO CITY—A private college here, reputed for its highly advanced computer facilities and curricula, has joined the elite circle of higher education institutions in the country which have their own supercomputers.

Lorma Colleges, through a team led by Rufino Macagba III, completed last week the development of a 19.6 gigaflop/s (floating point operation per second) supercomputer, which could be the first outside of Metro Manila.

This speed capacity tops even that of Ateneo de Manila University's Agila (3 gflop/s) and that of the University of the Philippines (5.4 gflop/s at peak performance), the site of the first school-based supercomputer in the country installed in July 1999.

"That is not something to sneeze about," Claremont University-educated Macagba, head of Lorma's Management Information Systems (MIS) department, told the INQUIRER.

Colleagues describe Macagba as a "visionary," "wizard," and "man with a mission."

Also not to sneeze about is the hardware cost of about $10,000 (P520,000) fully funded by the school, which "is very modest compared to commercially available products that cost millions of US dollars," he added.

According to Ana Belen Nano, dean of Lorma's College of Computer Studies and Engineering which spearheaded the supercomputer project, a recent survey of 288 schools nationwide conducted by the Commission on Higher Education yielded no report of schools (other than UP and Ateneo) having supercomputers.

"This would place Lorma in the league of educational centers in the world which are at the forefront of scientific research and development owing to their supercomputing capability," she added.

Lorma already holds the distinction as the CHEd Center of Development Excellence (CODE) in Information Technology in the Ilocos region.

The Lorma Colleges Center for Supercomputing Applications (LCCSA), dubbed "Penguin" after the mascot of Linux (operating system used), demonstrates the advantages of clustering based on readily available hardware and software compared to commercially available supercomputer systems. It costs less, is relatively easier to use and has a higher return on investment, Macagba explained.

Penguin was built with 17 nodes using AMD Duron 850 Mhz processors providing a total peak performance of more than 19.6 gflop/s. Each node runs Linux 2.4.2-2 operating system and Beowulf Type operating system extension. It features a 4.4 gigabyte RAM and 340 GB hard disk.

For this feat, Macagba shares the credit with 10 other "pioneers" from Lorma—Allan Cacdac and Angelito Carbonell of MIS; faculty members Nano, Rommel Oli, Abraham Pancho, Ferdinand Bulatao, Reyen Sabate, Conrado Cruz and Jeoffrey Layco; and senior IT student Herie Malacas.

The Penguin Supercomputer will be made available through the Internet by the third quarter of this year for research in mathematics, chemistry, physics, engineering and computer science, and digital graphics for production work.

Lorma is also willing to form a supercomputing consortium with interested parties, depending on their research focus, Macagba said.

The facility will also be made available to Lorma's undergraduate and high school students for their practical exercise in high performance computing, he added.

The scientific community considers supercomputing as the second "revolution" in the world today, next to the exploitation of the human genome.

Supercomputers can accomplish highly precise and complex calculations in a matter of seconds, making them vital tools in practically every field of research such as weather prediction, simulating forest fires, modeling the human brain, and quite importantly, simulating the behavior and effects of a nuclear bomb explosion.

In the last decade or so, government schools in the United States "have begun to snap up these costly machines (supercomputers)" to attract "scientists and businessmen and propel the (locality) into the front ranks of technological development," noted The Scientist magazine.

HK drug suspect accuses Cebu cops of extortion

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY--One of the alleged members of the Hong Kong Triad has accused members of the defunct Cebu City detective bureau of extortion.

Giovanni "Nanan" Gimenez executed an affidavit on Tuesday accusing SPO3 Perfecto Codiñera, head of the detective bureau, and his men of demanding P1.5 million in exchange for his and other suspects' freedom.

But, he said, they were only able to raise P500,000. The P300,000 was given to the policemen a few hours after their arrest on Sept. 7, 2001.

The P200,000 was allegedly handed to SPO1 Reynaldo Matillano, SPO1 Fernando Velarde after Gimenez, his brother Jovan and driver Victor Corpuz were presented to the media as members of the Hong Kong Triad.

Gimenez's affidavit, however, has yet to be subscribed by his new lawyer after the suspects hired a new attorney.

Codiñera vehemently denied Gimenez's allegations, saying the suspect just wanted to weaken the case filed by the police against him.

He said he and the other policemen accused by Gimenez planned to file libel charges against the suspect for maligning their reputation.

Chief Supt. Avelino Razon Jr., Police Regional Office director for Central Visayas, ordered the Regional Intelligence and Investigation Division (RIID) to look into Gimenez's allegations.

The Gimenez brothers and Corpuz are facing charges of violating the Dangerous Drugs Act after the members of the detective bureau allegedly found more than 300 grams of shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride) inside the suspects' Starex van.

In a news conference, then Supt. Hiram Benatiro tagged the suspects as "high level" drug pushers and members of the Hong Kong Triad.

But Gimenez said they were surprised when they were identified as Triad members. A policeman later told them that Codiñera wanted to make it appear that they caught a big fish.

Gimenez, however, said that on Sept. 7, 2001, they were repairing the electrical system of his Starex van, which was parked in front of a condominium in Barangay Kasambagan this city.

Suddenly, he added, the policemen arrived and pointed their guns at them. He identified them as Matillano, Velarde, SPO2 Ronilo Nabua, PO3 Cyril Valencia and PO1 Stanley Aldemita.

After pulling them out of the van, the policemen boarded the van and closed the doors. A few minutes later, Gimenez said, Codiñera and two village guards arrived.

Codiñera led them to the rear of the van. Then, Gimenez said somebody shouted in the dialect "here it is." A guard, identified as Arpon, held a plastic bag.

Gimenez said they were then brought to the office of the detective bureau where negotiations began. He said Matillano and Velarde asked him to produce P1.5 million "to settle things" before the arrest was recorded in the police blotter.

The policemen told them that they had evidence against them–the pack of shabu recovered from the van.

"To be released was the most important thing in our mind. We tried our best at least to produce something," Gimenez said.

At 10 p.m., he said they were able to produce only P300,000. At that time, he added, the policemen allegedly agreed to reduce the amount to P500,000.

While they were being pressured to produce the money, Gimenez claimed that the policemen also took some of their possessions.

These were an 8850 Nokia cellphone worth P31,000, a Cartier wallet worth P21,000, a Cartier ballpen worth P17,000, P10,000 in cash and a bracelet worth P48,000.

Gimenez said the policemen even took a receipt from a pawnshop for a pawned necklace with a pendant worth P90,000. He said he was asked to affix his signature at the back of the receipt.

Gimenez said the additional P200,000 was given to Matillano and Velarde after the suspects were presented to media on Sept. 10.

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: The Eastern section of the country will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms becoming widespread rains over Eastern Mindanao. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy.

SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	HI32° Lo 22°
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	HI 23° Lo 12°
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	HI 27° Lo 18°
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	HI 32° Lo 20°
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	HI 28° Lo 21°
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	HI 27° Lo 18°
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	HI 30° Lo 23°
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	HI 29° Lo 20°
Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy	HI 30° Lo 21°
Roxas	Partly Cloudy	HI 29° Lo 24°
Cebu	Partly Cloudy	HI 30° Lo 23°
Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains	HI 28° Lo 23°
Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy	HI 33° Lo 23°
Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy	HI 32° Lo 26°
Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy	HI 30° Lo 23°
Davao	Cloudy with Rains	HI 31° Lo 24°

Compiled by: Ray Leyesa, PDI Research/02/21/02

ROUNDUP

20 houses burn

TACLOBAN CITY—Twenty houses were destroyed when a fire hit an urban poor area in Barangay Sabang this city on Tuesday. No one was hurt but at least P500,000 worth of property were destroyed. Senior Fire Inspector Artemio Tabarranza, city fire chief, said the fire started at 3 p.m. from a house owned by Imelda Araza. The fire spread to adjoining houses, which were mostly made of light materials. Tabarranza said his office was still investigating the cause of the fire.

Cynthia Borgueta, PDI Visayas Bureau

Village head slain

PALO, Leyte—Unidentified suspects shot dead a village chief in Ormoc City on Feb. 13. Police said Gaas Barangay Captain Ruperto Domanillo, 53, suffered bullet wounds in the lower left eye and in the right chest after he was shot inside his house in Barangay Gaas. Policemen found a letter beside the victim's body, purportedly from the New People's Army-Northern Leyte Committee Front, indicating that Domanillo was in its order of battle, the police report said.

Cynthia Borgueta, PDI Visayas Bureau

Life term for Bacolod cop

BACOLOD CITY—A Bacolod policeman was meted 80 years in prison on Monday for raping his 12-year-old housemaid twice in 1994. Judge Roberto Chiongson of the Regional Trial Court found SPO2 George Jayme Sr., 53 and a member of the Bacolod City Traffic Division, guilty of raping the girl in his house in Murcia town. The first rape occurred on Oct. 16, 1994 inside Jayme's house while his family was not at home.

Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau

4 outstanding cops

PALO, Leyte—The Philippine National Police in Eastern Visayas awarded four outstanding policemen during its 11th anniversary on Monday. Senior Supt. Fortunato Febria was cited for his stint as supervisor of the Regional Election Monitoring Action Center during the May 14 elections. Senior Supt. Angel Cordero was rewarded for being efficient as chief of the PNP Crime Laboratory Service. Chief Insp. Pio Manito was awarded for his efficiency as chief of the police operations and plans division. Chief Insp. Manuel Cubillo, police deputy chief for intelligence division, was cited for the arrest of Leo Suico in Merida town, last Oct. 8. Suico was facing charges of double murder and double frustrated murder.

Cynthia Borgueta, PDI Visayas Bureau

Quezon cops commended

LUCENA CITY—Four Quezon police officers led by Supt. Roberto Rosales, Quezon police chief, were commended during the recent 11th anniversary of the Police Regional Office 4 in Canlubang, Laguna. Rosales was cited best provincial director. The other awardees were Supt. Danny Ramon Siongco, Lucena City police chief, best citizen-friendly police station; Chief Insp. Elmer Escosia, chief of the 414th Provincial Mobile Group, best provincial mobile group; and Supt. Manuel Milla, Catanauan, Quezon police chief, best citizen-friendly police station—municipal and regional levels. ***Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***

Pirate killed

CAMP OLIVAS, Pampanga—Suspected communist rebels on Sunday shot dead a leader of pirates said to be victimizing small fishpond owners and fishermen in the Bulacan-Pampanga-Bataan coast of Manila Bay since the 1980s. The Rebolusyonaryong Hukbong Bayan on Monday claimed in a statement that the killing of Tila Puno, the suspected leader of a seven-member pirate band, was its way of punishing him. 'Ka Tomas," who claimed to be the RHB chief of the Manila Bay Coastal Front, said RHB rebels shot and killed Puno in Barangay Mabuanbuan, Sasmuan.

Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Kidnap gang busted

THE NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation arrested a member of a notorious kidnapping gang in Southern Tagalog in San Pablo City last week. NBI Deputy Director for Intelligence Samuel Ong said that arrested suspect Eduardo Fernandez, alias "Ka Jun," 39, of Andaman Village, Lucena City was part of the gang that kidnapped Yolanda and Silvino Escobar, of Sta. Teresita Street, Sampaloc, Manila, and owners of Raymond Transit. The gang demanded a P3-million ransom for the release of the Escobars. The bureau is conducting a nationwide manhunt for the other members of the group.

Philip Tubeza Jr.

'INFORMAL TALKS'

GMA aide keeps peace hopes alive

FORT DEL PILAR, Baguio City—Informal talks between the government and the National Democratic Front have not been severed despite NDF founder Jose Ma. Sison's threat to suspend the Oslo peace talks because of the presence of American troops in the country, Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Eduardo Ermita said.

"The back channeling still continues. The (NDF) had been making public statements (against the Balikatan) but their side had been (open) to the informal talks . . . I wish though that the (NDF officials) would stop making these statements because it sends the wrong signals," Ermita told the INQUIRER on Sunday. He attended the Philippine Military Academy alumni homecoming here.

Ermita said government peace panel members are waiting for the NDF draft containing their proposed terms of reference for the second round of talks that will focus on social and economic reforms.

Ermita said an exchange of notes for a proposed Comprehensive Agreement on Social and Economic Reforms (Caser), the second in a four-stage negotiation between the government and the NDF, should resume in March.

Caser follows the Comprehensive Agreement on the Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (Carhihl), which was signed in 1998.

Ermita's statements were taken as a "good development" by human rights advocates here.

Beverly Longid, secretary general of the Dinteg alternative law center, said briefings conducted by human rights observers in the Oslo talks had been fearful about the impact of the "Balikatan 02-1" exercises on the negotiations.

Longid said human rights groups in the country have been briefed extensively about the progress of the talks.

She said their updated peace talks reports are usually supplied by nominees to a joint monitoring committee that would oversee Carhihl, although the government has yet to formalize its appointees.

Longid said the March resumption of the talks may prompt the government to apply Carhihl by installing its representatives to the agreement's monitoring group.

Peace talks with the NDF were disrupted under the administration of ousted President Joseph Estrada following the Philippine Senate's approval of the Visiting Forces Agreement.

The VFA, leftist groups said, would allow unlimited access to US soldiers in Philippine territory.

Some leftist groups described the VFA as worse than the bases treaty which allowed basing rights to US forces in Subic and Clark.

Hopes that the talks would succeed were high under the term of former President Corazon Aquino but the negotiations collapsed following the massacre of dozens of farmers marching near Malacañang to demand land reform.

Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Defense head cites courage of PMAer slain in Basilan

FORT DEL PILAR, Baguio City—When the body of 2nd Lt. Raymond Arnaiz Hernandez was recovered after he was killed on Feb. 8 by the followers of Moro leader Nur Misuari in an ambush in Sulu, a short note was found in his pocket.

It said: "To the PMA (Philippine Military Academy), thank you for everything that you have taught me. To my underclassmen, take charge of the corps and its members."

Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes, in his speech before PMA cavaliers during the PMA Alumni Homecoming on Sunday, cited Hernandez, who belonged to the PMA Sanghaya Class of 2000, and his slain classmate, 2nd Lt. Gene Kenneth Bulong, for personifying the highest ideals of a PMA alumnus.

Bulong was killed on June 2, 2001 in Lamitan, Basilan when his vehicle was hit by an anti-tank mortar fired by Abu Sayyaf rebels.

Bulong, 22, and a native of Ifugao, was killed during a firefight with Abu Sayyaf bandits who were holed up at a hospital in Lamitan, Basilan, with more than a dozen hostages. A rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) pierced the V-150 armored vehicle that Bulong commanded. He was executive officer of the Army's 11th Light Armor Company.

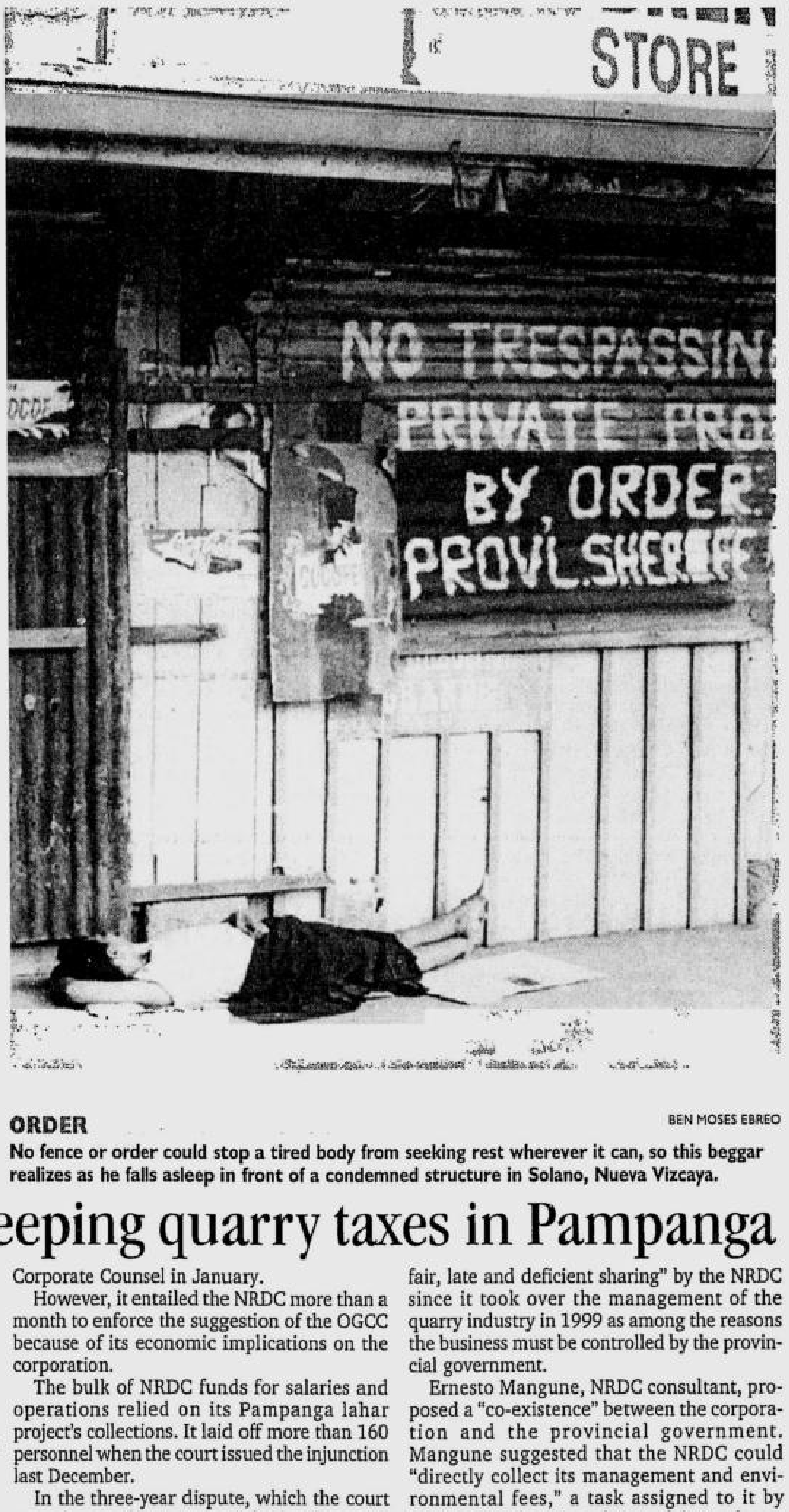
"These two cavaliers are like the others who went before them. They can't be with us here now but they are watching the proceedings feeling no remorse but pride over their sacrifices. We honor them deeply as they honor their alma mater," Reyes told about 1,000 PMA alumni gathered at the Borromeo Field here.

The PMA Class 2000's name, "Sanghaya," means "honor," according to Philippine Air Force Lt. Rifiel Sotto, the class' treasurer.

For a class that was only two years old, the Sanghaya Class has already lost five of its 244 members.

At the PMA Memorial Wall, the name of Hernandez is still to be etched on the dark marble wall.

Almost a year before Hernandez's death, on Feb. 9 last year, Army 2nd Lt. Jessica Chavez died mysteriously inside her room at the Military Police headquarters in Fort Bonifacio. Chavez had a bullet wound in her chest but investigators discounted suicide in her case. ***Frank Cimatu, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***



ORDER

BEN MOSES EBREO

No fence or order could stop a tired body from seeking rest wherever it can, so this beggar realizes as he falls asleep in front of a condemned structure in Solano, Nueva Vizcaya.

NGO says illegal logging back

A COMMUNITY-based environment watch group protested what it said was the resurgence of illegal logging, illegal fishing and trading of endangered plant and animal species in Palawan and Puerto Princesa City.

Antonio Romasanta, president of the Bantay Puerto Foundation, in a press statement said nearly 10 years of vigilant environment protection and development programs and achievements are going down the drain with the resurgence of illegal logging and illegal fishing activities.

Lush tropical rainforests are threatened by the resurgence of illegal logging in the upland areas where illegal loggers using chainsaws and portable sawmills operate, he said.

Even rich mangrove forests along the city's coastal areas including Iwahig are not being spared by illegal loggers and wood traders, Romasanta added.

"The best proof that illegal logging is back with a vengeance is the open and easy availability of a variety of lumber in the city—ranging from choice hardwoods like Narra, Molave and Kamagong to common species like Tanguile, Ipil and Apitong," he said.

Romasanta also condemned the upsurge in destructive fishing practices like *hulbot-hulbot* (use of illegal fish nets), baby trawling, cyanide and dynamite fishing which irreversibly destroy the rich marine and coastal resources in all the bays of Puerto Princesa.

He said dynamite and cyanide fishing is rampant in the northern barangays of Lucbuan and Manalo and in Napsan and adjacent towns in the West Coast.

Lapid bent on keeping quarry taxes in Pampanga

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Gov. Manuel Lapid on Monday insisted that the Pampanga provincial government has the "exclusive right" to collect quarry taxes even as the Natural Resources Development Corp. began negotiations for a tax-sharing scheme.

Lapid invoked the 1991 Local Government Code, the same law that a local judge cited in a December decision that upheld the right of the provincial government to collect taxes from sand-rich areas in the province.

The NRDC, which was stopped by the regional trial court from generating taxes, began the talks after it withdrew from the Court of Appeals last Friday a petition questioning the RTC's December decision.

In withdrawing the petition, the NRDC, the corporate arm of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, heeded the recommendation of the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel in January.

However, it entailed the NRDC more than a month to enforce the suggestion of the OGCC because of its economic implications on the corporation.

The bulk of NRDC funds for salaries and operations relied on its Pampanga lahar project's collections. It laid off more than 160 personnel when the court issued the injunction last December.

In the three-year dispute, which the court regards as a "hot test case" for local government units in conflict with government-owned corporations such as the NRDC, Lapid has consistently taken an adamant position.

"Pampanga suffered hard from the Pinatubo disaster. After it, however, we have lots of sand. Hundreds of families depend on this industry now," Lapid said.

He cited "mismanagement" as well as "unfair, late and deficient sharing" by the NRDC since it took over the management of the quarry industry in 1999 as among the reasons the business must be controlled by the provincial government.

Ernesto Mangune, NRDC consultant, proposed a "co-existence" between the corporation and the provincial government. Mangune suggested that the NRDC could "directly collect its management and environmental fees," a task assigned to it by former President Joseph Estrada's Proclamation No. 66.

But Lapid said they consider the order "unconstitutional and illegal."

"We will negotiate from the position that the provincial government has the exclusive power and authority over the quarry activities," he said.

Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Jaro priests protest order forcing retirement at 65

By Ma. Diosa Labiste
and Raj Padilla
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—Senior priests are resisting the winds of change at the Archdiocese of Jaro. They are protesting a circular, which sets the required retirement age of parish priests at 65.

Seven prelates and 12 parish priests told a news conference on Sunday that Jaro Archbishop Angel Lagdameo went against the canon law when he issued Circular No. 44 on Jan. 3.

Under the circular, the obligatory retirement of parish priests shall be 65, "without excluding new possibilities of continuing pastoral work in the Archdiocese."

Msgr. Enrique Perez, 64, a canon lawyer and a parish priest of La Paz District, said the circular was "a violation of the basic rights of priests, especially those who are affected."

He cited paragraph 3 of Canon 528, which states that a parish priest, after turning 75, is requested to offer his resignation to the diocesan bishop, who may decide to accept or defer it.

"The archbishop by this decree is dispensing from the universal law (canon law)," said the protesting priests in a statement. The canon law governs the Roman Catholic Church.

The statement was signed by 19 senior priests in the archdiocese, one of the oldest and richest dioceses in the country that covers Iloilo and Guimaras.

In a statement, Lagdameo Tuesday said the decision to set the retirement age to 65 was reached after consultations were conducted in May, June and September last year.

He added that there were continuing consultations. A general assembly was scheduled today to discuss the issue.

"I wish to assure my brother priests that my circular was not intended to formulate a juridical norm against (the) canon law. But my disposition was for pastoral reasons after a series of consultations with the clergy," wrote Lagdameo.

The priests also protested the impending reshuffle of parish priests because it would mean the "forced retirement" of elderly priests.

They further said that Lagdameo tried to split the archdiocese into two camps, the old and the young priests, thus "destroying the harmonious relations" among the Jaro clergy.

Perez said young priests wanted to take over the archdiocese.

Msgr. Nemesio Espinosa, parish priest of Sta. Barbara, said the priests are grouped according to their age level during meetings. He also accused Lagdameo of playing favorites.

Lagdameo refuted the prelates' statement, saying he was always willing to listen to all priests. He said he hoped the issue would be resolved at the proper forum, among them the vicariate meeting, the Presbyteral Council, the Board of Consultors, the Commission on the Clergy and the Clergy Assembly.

Perez and his group wrote Papal Nuncio Archbishop Antonio Franco last Jan. 10 for his comment on Lagdameo's circular. They asked if Lagdameo could act against the canon law without the consent of the Vatican.

On Jan. 12, Perez filed a petition before Lagdameo's office, seeking the revocation of the circular.

Franco, however, took the side of Lagdameo. In his letter last Feb. 13, Franco explained that the essence of Lagdameo's decision is that after reaching the age of 65, a priest can no longer be assigned to a parish but will be transferred to a different ministry.

He said Lagdameo's circular "does not intend to abrogate the Code of Canon Law," but may have been formulated in an "ambiguous way," leaving the impression that it violated Church rules.

Franco said the issue would be submitted to the Vatican for decision.

What about Ediborah?

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Pamaran said the latest information on his sister that his family had received was that she was already emaciated as a result of the ordeal.

"Still, she has been acting as doctor and nurse of the Burnham couple," he said.

Last month, Yap's sister, Elvira Pamaran Valbuena, said the hostage-taking incident has forced the captive's four children—Jonathan, Anthony, Mary Anne and Bon-bon—to stop going to school as "there is no support going their way."

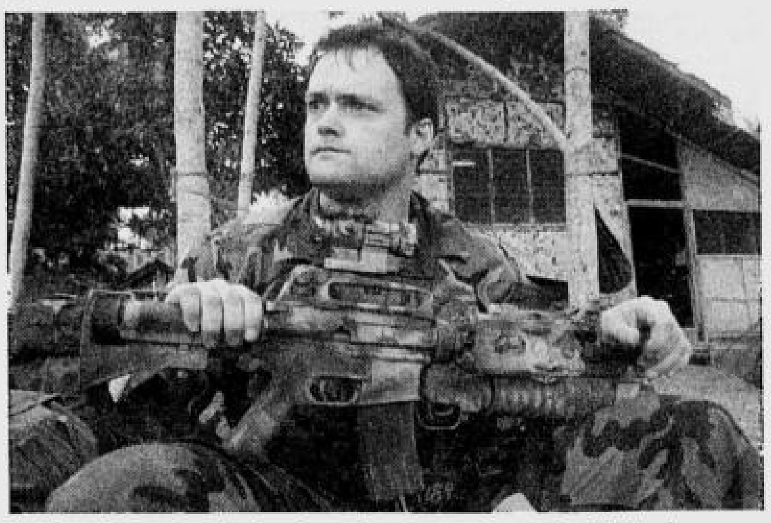
Yap is separated from her husband, who is now based in Cotabato.

Dr. Rusty Francisco, organizer of the prayer rally, said the government should also show concern over the safety of the Filipino nurse.

"Why do we give more importance to the American hostages and not to our fellow Filipino," he said. ***Reports from Norman Bordadora and Carlito Pablo, and Inquirer wires***

GIs move deeper into Basilan jungle

From page A1



A US soldier guards the American quarters at the Philippine Army's 103rd Brigade base in Tagbiawan, Basilan. VAL HANDUMON

and photographers there were asked not use their flashes as that would have affected the night vision equipment.

The Philippine military has said the lack of night vision equipment has been a major drawback in their fight against the Abu Sayyaf.

Presidential spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao yesterday said the US Special Forces could conduct night flights over Basilan as part of the joint military exercises dubbed "Balikatan 02-1."

"The only limit is that they have to clear it with the chief of staff (of the Armed Forces of the Philippines) and the training co-directors," he said.

The co-directors he was referring to were Philippine Marine Brig. Emmanuel Teodosio and US Air Force Brig. Gen. Donaldo Wurster, chief for Special Operations of the US Pacific Command.

Tiglao made the confirmation amid reports that the Americans would be employing high-tech surveillance devices to locate the Abu Sayyaf's main force.

The US military is known to possess not only night flight capability and surveillance equipment but also the technology to fight and neutralize enemies from the air in pitch-dark conditions.

For ground fighting, the US forces are normally equipped with night vision goggles and thermal rifle scopes.

Tiglao, however, refused to confirm whether sophisticated surveillance gear, particularly those which can detect body heat beneath jungle canopies, would be on board aircraft to be used in night flights.

"No, I can't. That's a very tactical military information," he said.

Building process

"This is a building process," said Lt. Col. David Maxwell, head of the US contingent in Basilan, as four helicopters ferried US troops from their main base in Zamboanga city for joint operations against the Abu Sayyaf.

Maxwell did not give the precise number of troops moving closer to the Abu Sayyaf hideout from the Tabiawan camp, 10 kilometers from the heart of Basilan's capital city of Isabela.

On Tuesday, two Filipino soldiers from the Special Navy Warfare Group were wounded in a battle with the Abu Sayyaf off the coast of Basilan.

The battleground was about 7 km from the Tabiawan camp.

The Philippine military has sent two MG-520 helicopter gunships and navy gunboats to the area to pursue the Abu Sayyaf band, but US troops are not engaged in pursuit operations, officials said.

The fighting occurred just before Philippine troops rescued two brothers near Isabela from the hands of another Abu Sayyaf faction that seized them on Sunday.

The bandits had branded the duo as military informants.

M-4 Carbines

Just hours after arriving in Basilan, the new US arrivals were seen demonstrating to their Filipino counterparts how to use their M-4 Carbines, an improved version of the 20-year-old M-16 rifles that most of the Philippine soldiers still use.

Several of the Americans, escorted by local troops, then proceeded to a jungle camp of the Scout Rangers at the very edge of the jungle where the Abu Sayyaf bandits are known to be hiding.

Residents came out of their homes to gawk as the Americans and their Filipino escorts drove past aboard three trucks, followed by a convoy of journalists.

Lt. Col. Renato Padua, head of the Ranger camp, said they were preparing to billet 12 of the US troops at the camp to train and advise Filipino soldiers in pursuing the enemy.

Small parties of US troops also proceeded to other jungle camps set up by the local military for operations against the Abu Sayyaf.

Under the terms of reference of the joint operations, the Americans will only observe and advise local soldiers during the joint operations that will last till July.

US forces will not actually fight the Abu Sayyaf but may fire back if attacked. ***Reports from Carlito Pablo and Inquirer wires***

Pershing's ghost haunts Abus

From page A1

tion and infrastructure," Marievic Montano told a US platoon ahead of its deployment to Basilan.

This largely Christian city is the jump-off point for US Special Forces troops taking part in the Balikatan 02-1 joint military training exercise in the Abu Sayyaf stronghold.

Between 1900 and 1909, Pershing led a brutal pacification campaign in Mindanao after Madrid ceded its Southeast Asian colony to Washington at the end of the Spanish-American War.

The American cavalryman, popularly known as "Black Jack Pershing," came face to face with a type of Moro rebel, called "juramentado" who, according to him, "worked himself up to religious frenzy and went forth to kill all unbelievers until he himself is killed."

By the general's own account, these precursors of suicide bombers were the reason the US war department "recalled its .38 cal. Colt and Smith and Wesson revolvers from the Philippines and substituted the heavier Colt .45 automatic."

Pershing later became the commander of the US expeditionary force to Europe during World War I.

But few residents of Zamboanga City know about the old wars.

"I'm sure that Pershing is American, but beyond that I don't know him," said Abdurrahman Estino, a policeman patrolling the crowded park.

In the middle of the park, a detergent company has built plastic replicas of the World Trade Center towers, destroyed in the Sept. 11 terror attacks.

The models, which bear the logo of the company, "symbolize peace and hope," Desiree Alabata, 30, said as she handed out samples. "The Twin Towers were rebuilt to show that the economy will recover."

Sabaya

Of course, the promo girl said, she knew about Abu Sabaya. But she was unaware he had actually studied nearby.

Sabaya, now 39, had studied criminology in preparation for a police job, according to military intelligence sources.

He dropped out after two years, went to work in Saudi Arabia, and returned in 1999 to hook up with the Abu Sayyaf.

The ruthless bandits last year beheaded an American tourist and 13 Filipinos in Basilan after a kidnapping spree. The gang still holds hostage a US Christian missionary couple and a Filipino nurse.

The Abu Sayyaf does not enjoy much local sympathy, but "the young are very idealistic and sometimes there might be tendencies for them to be swayed into believing such an ideal and a cause to fight for," according to Zamboanga City Councilor Isabelle Climaco.

Climaco said a school principal in a fishing village on the city's outskirts had complained "that students were being recruited into the Abu Sayyaf with cash inducements."

Some of the boys from poor families had vanished, and the teachers were distraught, she added.

Fond memories

Unlike some historians who have described Pershing as a butcher whose troops massacred over 1,000 Muslims nearly a century ago, Florencia Mankin has fond memories of the strapping officer who rode through Zamboanga on a chestnut horse and often dropped an apple in her tiny hands.

"One day, when I was 6, he got off his big pony and said to me 'How do you like to go to America?' He was joking, but I did not know how to speak English," Mankin recalled, her hair now snowy white. She turns 98 on Saturday.

Nearly blind from cataracts, Mankin has heard that the Americans have returned, no longer atop galloping horses but aboard attack helicopters and military planes.

But she does not know why the Americans are back. And yes, she has heard about the Abu Sayyaf.

"Every day, you hear on the radio, Abu Sayyaf, Abu Sayyaf, but I don't know anything about them," she said.

As a child, neither was she aware of how thousands of Muslims, including women and children, perished under the American sword during the US pacification campaign at the turn of the 20th century.

'Blond devils'

Although most Filipinos acquiesced to American rule, Muslims resisted the "blond devils" until 1915.

"Pershing's men literally butchered more than 1,000 Muslims in the uprising in Bud Dajo in the name of peace and democracy. Yet here in Zamboanga, they even named a plaza after him," said Muslim professor Amilusin Jumaani.

But Mankin lived in a different past.

The daughter of a laundrywoman who washed clothes for Pershing and his troops, Mankin said she was not aware of the horrors and did not hear of them when she was a child.

In her cavernous house surrounded by red, yellow and white blossoms, Mankin's mind reached back to the times when life was simple and the sounds she often heard through her window were the ramble of horses carrying US cavalrymen to a base nearby.

"Pershing was a big man, like the other Americans. They were good to us. They treated us right," she said.

"Wherever they went, they gave you something. All of them were carrying bundles of food that they gave to the little girls: apples, chocolates, and cheese."

Mankin said there was no trouble with Muslims because they lived on boats in the sea and came to land only when they wanted to exchange seashells for the Christians' bananas.

Marriage

Fifteen years later in 1925 when she was a schoolteacher at an American rubber plantation in Basilan, she married one of Pershing's soldiers—Sgt. James Percy Mankin of Missouri.

"He was the only man in my life, my first and last," she said.

Mankin broke into childish laughter on recalling how the former sergeant from Missouri won her heart.

One day, a man appeared at her schoolroom window. "He blew me a kiss from the window. I was so frightened," she said.

The man, who was then the plantation manager, often came bringing her chocolates. "Don't be afraid of me," he said. "I will take care of you."

A year later, they were married. She was 21 and he, 47.

The idyll ended in the 1940s when the Americans pulled out of town and the Japanese forces came.

The first bomb that Japanese planes dropped on Zamboanga fell on the Mankin house, she said. By then, she and her family had fled to the hills.

Her husband, however, spent four years as a Japanese prisoner of war in the 1940s. Arthritis killed him in 1963. Two of the Mankins' three children followed him to the grave later.

The woman the sergeant loved visits him at the local Masonic cemetery once a week.

And a portrait of him, showing him in his soldiers' uniform and holding a cavalry sword, gazes down near the top of the stairs in the house where his widow now lives. ***Reports from AFP and Reuters***

Palace twisted facts, says opposition lawmaker

From page A1

It was this same tape, Remulla said, that the previous administration showed to the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, which was critical of the so-called all-out war that then President Joseph Estrada had declared against the MILF.

"Malacañang is twisting facts to downplay public concern that the Americans are in Mindanao not for a mere military exercise but for combat operations against the Abu Sayyaf," Remulla said, referring to the ongoing RP-US Balikatan 02-01 exercise in Basilan and Zamboanga.

He said the bishops, Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes, who was then the Armed Forces chief of staff, and ABS-CBN reporter Tony Velasquez could confirm his statement.

Contacted by the Inquirer, Velasquez confirmed that the tape released by Malacañang was the same one he had viewed with then Press Secretary Ricardo Puno in August or September 2000, and that he knew the atrocities were committed by the MILF.

He said he viewed the tape with Puno after it was shown to CBCP members.

Velasquez said that he had wanted to air the video but Puno, a former ABS-CBN executive, opposed it because of the "brutality of the scene which (Puno) thought to be too sensitive to be shown to the public."

"Either the tape was misrepresented to then-President Estrada or is being misrepresented now to President Macapagal-Arroyo," Velasquez added.

At the Senate, opposition Sen. Teresa Aquino-Oreta chided Malacañang's "spin doctors" for releasing the videotape and deceiving the public.

Citing her own sources, she said the footage showed MILF rebels, not Abu Sayyaf bandits. The footage was aired on the two rival networks, GMA and ABS-CBN.

But administration senators Ralph Recto and Francis Pangilinan defended Malacañang's "responsible decision" to release the videotape.

Recto said that the controversial film embodied the truth on Abu Sayyaf atrocities.

"It's the truth, not virtual reality," Recto said. "In fact, the scene shown was far tamer than the violent fare one can see on primetime TV," he said.

For his part, Pangilinan said that the public had the right to know about the beheading and that access to information was one of the most democratic ways to empower the people.

Not MILF

Reached for comment, Grace dela Peña-Reyes, head of news operations at GMA, said that when the GMA news desk previewed the tape, several people "saw someone who looked like Khadaffy Janjalani (the current Abu Sayyaf leader)."

In addition, "some reporters who covered the Abu Sayyaf extensively saw someone who looked like one of Janjalani's younger brother. Another reporter saw someone who looked like one of his contacts in Abu Sayyaf."

A GMA official said the footage the network ran on Monday was provided by a source outside the government. When Malacañang released a video of the beheadings on Tuesday, GMA-7 compared it with the one provided by its independent source and saw that they were the same.

In his regular press briefing, presidential spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao dismissed claims that the armed men shown in the video were not Abu Sayyaf but MILF rebels.

"As far as we know, it's the Abu Sayyaf. In the long history of the MILF, we've never seen them or heard reports of them that they behead people," Tiglao said.

Former Sen. Orlando Mercado, defense chief during the Estrada administration, said that as far as he could recall, the footage showed Abu Sayyaf beheadings.

Mercado said that while he could not recall whether he had personally watched the tape then, he remembered that one of the scenes showed a captured militiaman being interviewed, made to pray the Lord's Prayer and beheaded while praying.

One of the chilling scenes aired on Monday showed a soldier being asked his name and how many Muslims and Christians he had killed. The soldier was then told to recite the "Our Father" before he was decapitated.

Armed Forces spokesperson Brig. Gen. Edilberto Adan said the beheadings followed a clash with the Abu Sayyaf in January 1995 in which nine soldiers and two government militiamen were killed.

Adan also lashed out at critics who claimed the footage showed MILF rebels, accusing them of misleading the public.

"If there are MILF members there, it just proves our theory that the MILF is with the Abu Sayyaf . . . which is often the case. But this is the Abu Sayyaf," he said in a telephone interview.

"They (critics) should not muddle the issue by saying that it's the MILF . . . We are showing (the footage) made by the Abu Sayyaf," Adan said.

He said the footage was taken in Maluso, Basilan, in 1995, when the military was operating against the Abu Sayyaf.

The poor-quality tape—compiled over several months in late 1994 and early 1995—was aired by the GMA and ABS-CBN television networks. One showed the graphic footage complete; the other blurred the beheadings.

One scene shows an alleged guerrilla hacking a man lying on the ground four times on the neck with a large, wide-bladed knife while several others watched.

In another, a guerrilla in camouflage comes from behind a sitting, blindfolded man, his hands tied behind his back, and hacks him on the neck. The man does not fall immediately and the guerrilla hacks him again.

Conflicting statements

Ms Macapagal herself defended the release and the airing of the controversial footage, but conflicting statements by Malacañang officials overshadowed her spirited defense.

Press Undersecretary Roberto Capco told Palace reporters Tuesday that the President herself had approved the showing of the tape, after she had viewed it. When asked again yesterday over dzBB whether the President indeed approved of it, Capco answered with a crisp: "*Siyempre* (Of course)."

But President Macapagal, in a separate interview over Bombo Radyo, said: "I did not instruct the release (of the tape) but it came out just the same."

Presidential spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao said it was the decision of the Armed Forces of the Philippines to distribute the tape to television networks.

Asked whether Capco was wrong in saying that Ms Macapagal had given the order, Tiglao said: "Yes."

Press Secretary Noel Cabrera, Capco's immediate superior, said his office was informed by the military about the existence of the said tape and that his office "(weighed) possible reaction" because of its gory content.

"That's right, we anticipated reactions that it is so gory," Cabrera said over dzMM. "We told the military if they will distribute the tapes, we'll tell the (television) stations to do something . . . not show the actual point of cutting the head."

But for the President, the videotape was beside the point.

"Wasn't it that I said before that those who oppose the Balikatan are perhaps Abu Sayyaf lovers?" she said.

"The people should know whom to love: those defending the country or those giving our soldiers and citizens much suffering," the President said.

She pointed out that the Abu Sayyaf themselves had allowed their American hostages Martin and Gracia Burnham to be interviewed in front of a video camera "to plead that we stop our campaign to free them."

"What I can say is that the people have the right to know," she said. "Is it not right for us to be transparent?"

"It's different if what was shown was a fakery but it's the truth. If it's the truth, don't people have the right to know how evil the Abu Sayyaf is?" the President also said.

She also recalled past atrocities of the Abu Sayyaf, including the torture and killing of Claretian missionary Fr. Rhoel Gallardo.

Bishop shocked

In Isabela City, Basilan Bishop Martin Jumoad said the video footage was too shocking and should have been kept from the public.

"I myself was too shocked that I immediately switched off the television," Jumoad told the Inquirer.

The prelate said the showing of the footage would only deepen the hatred harbored by some people.

"It's just like telling our children that it is all right to watch and do such gory acts. We have had enough of that here, no need to show the whole world, we've seen what the bandits did to one of our priests, Fr. Rhoel Gallardo," Jumoad said.

Tahir Latip, an engineer in Basilan, said the video had "sparked anger and sown more animosity."

"It created more division among Muslims and Christians here," he said.

Even American soldier Sgt. Jeffrey Johnson said that such a gory videotape should not have been shown on television, which is readily accessible to children.

Jumoad said there was no need for the government to draw more support for the Balikatan as the people of Basilan were already behind it.

In Congress, Bayan Muna Representatives Crispin Beltran and Liza Maza assailed the Palace decision to allow the public viewing of the video as well as its bid to reproduce and distribute it.

"This horrifying video is not an educational tool. It is in fact, a psywar propaganda tool that toys with people's emotions," Maza said in a statement.

She said the tape's release was meant to "sow massive fear and panic in order to gain support for the US government's meddling in our internal affairs."

The controversial video was the same footage shown by the Estrada administration in 1998 to drum up support for its "all-out war" against the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front, the group's spokesperson Eid Kabalu told INQ7.net yesterday.

"Apparently, it's the government's secret weapon against its enemies. It's part of the psychological warfare it had launched to gain support for the Balikatan exercises which have become very unpopular in Basilan," Kabalu said.

Kabalu's reaction came amid claims by opposition Senators Edgardo Angara and Teresa Aquino-Oreta that the video showed MILF members doing the beheading, not Abu Sayyaf bandits.

A dzBB radio report quoted Angara as saying the footage was the same one the military had in its possession during the short-lived Estrada administration, which launched an all-out war against the MILF.

Kabalu said his group did not commit the gruesome murders. "There's no truth to that. The senators might have said that because when the video was shown to businessmen and religious groups in 1998, the MILF was identified as the one who beheaded the soldiers," he said.

Kabalu said he believed that those shown on the tapes were Abu Sayyaf guerillas.

President Macapagal-Arroyo maintained on Wednesday, however, that the tape "was from Basilan so (the perpetrators) must have been Abu Sayyaf."

"I didn't know about the tape in the first place. They just said they had a tape of the Abu Sayyaf and they wanted to show it. I have not seen it," she told INQ7.net during a visit to a resettlement area in San Pedro, Laguna.

She did not say who "they" were.

Ms Macapagal had told INQ7.net on Tuesday that the decision to release the video "was not done at my level . . . but I am not objecting to it." She said the decision was an "operational matter." ***With reports from Carlito Pablo, Agnes Donato; Julie Alipala and Rolly San Juan, PDI Mindanao Bureau; Fe Zamora, Lira Dalangin and Dart Tiglao, INQ7.net; AFP and AP***

They cheered, they laughed, they donated

By Martin Marfil

THE CONTROVERSIAL video footage showing alleged Abu Sayyaf members chopping off the heads of government soldiers has made the rounds of Middle Eastern countries.

Armed Forces spokesperson Brig. Gen. Edilberto Adan said the Abu Sayyaf, through the al-Qaida network, had used it to raise funds from sympathetic overseas workers based in the Middle East.

"The tape was sent by an Abu Sayyaf member through their al-Qaida connection to gain support for their cause," Adan said on Tuesday.

"We would like to announce that some of these tapes taken by an Abu Sayyaf cameraman were sent to the Middle East to gather support for the cause of the extremists/terrorists in our land," he said without elaborating.

Other military officials said they first learned of the existence of the tape in the Middle East when an overseas worker brought one home in 1998.

According to them, the worker learned of the tape in 1997 when he saw groups of workers streaming into a neighbor's house.

Inside, the workers were heard cheering and laughing.

"After the showing, donations were given. This happened several times," an official who spoke on condition of anonymity said yesterday.

The next year, when the worker returned to the Philippines, he brought home a copy of the tape and gave it to military intelligence, the official said.

RP envoy's son faces assault charge in US

From page A1

documents relating to Mortensen's complaint on Andre Diago Lhuillier, 23, who is believed to be in the Philippines.

Andre's US lawyers have reportedly refused to accept service of the complaint, forcing them to ask Philippine authorities for help in serving the summons to Andre or his father.

Mortensen belongs to the prominent Alano and Murga families of Mindanao. Her maternal family, the Murgas, originally from Zamboanga City, went to live in the United States after Kelly's brother and uncle were kidnapped in Zamboanga and taken hostage in Basilan in 1981. During the exchange of ransom money, the uncle was killed.

Documents obtained from the justice department showed that Andre Lhuillier faced charges of "battery, assault, intentional infliction of emotional stress, negligent infliction of emotional stress, intentional misrepresentation, negligence and breach of trust."

The documents had been sent last December to Vice President and Foreign Secretary Teofisto Guingona by one of Mortensen's US lawyers, Erik A. Humber, who formally requested that they be served on Andre.

Case filed

Mortensen, 26, filed the civil case in the Superior Court of California in San Mateo County on July 23, 2001.

In her complaint, Mortensen said she had been subjected to repeated physical assault and abuse between the summer of 1999 and the second quarter of 2001 when she and Andre were living together in San Mateo County.

She said the assaults occurred in their San Mateo house and in other places, and involved Lhuillier's allegedly "pushing, shoving, kicking, (using) his hands and fists, throwing objects (at Mortensen), and (using) a golf club, a tennis racquet, and a wooden box to inflict harm on the plaintiff."

The reasons for the alleged "irrational tantrums" included the times that Lhuillier felt Mortensen was "not being attentive" to him; "not listening" to what he was saying; when she violated traffic rules when driving; and when Mortensen failed to "return to their residence quickly enough."

In October 2000, claiming she was not being attentive to him, Lhuillier allegedly tried to choke Mortensen, slapped her, threatened to kill her, "thereafter striking her forcefully and intentionally with a tennis racquet multiple times in her body."

For taking too long to buy food in a restaurant, Lhuillier allegedly "forced her to eat the fast food she had purchased, even going so far as to systematically physically force the food" into Mortensen's mouth.

He also allegedly forced her to "sit under the sink in the bathroom" and "tried to force (her) to drink water from the toilet bowl."

Golf club

In another incident, he allegedly "forcefully assault(ed) her with a golf club."

On Dec. 2000, Lhuillier allegedly dragged Mortensen "by her hair," hit her all over the body and "slammed her head multiple times into a door jamb."

While she lay on the floor after another beating, he left and returned after an hour and allegedly "inflicted further physical assaults by forcefully stepping on her back and kicking her with great force on her head."

Lhuillier allegedly warned Mortensen against telling anyone about the assaults, threatening to kill her or commit suicide if she did so.

Mortensen said she did not get medical help after the attacks for fear of what Lhuillier would do to her if he found out.

She said she was then still "in love" with him and wanted to help him. She also did not want him to leave her. She thought that it was "her failings" that caused the beatings.

She finally went for medical treatment last Dec. 12 when the beatings and subsequent fall left her with "laceration of the scalp, headaches, pain, embarrassment, anxiety and emotional stress."

She is seeking "general damages" for her ordeal, "medical expenses, counseling expenses and loss of earnings," among others.

Not in Italy

The Inquirer has repeatedly tried to reach Ambassador Lhuillier by phone in Rome. A consular assistant, Janny Maya, said yesterday he was not in Italy and that would not be back until Friday.

Yesterday, the Inquirer called the Lhuillier residence in Dasmariñas Village and asked for Andre. A certain Jessa Silva said he had gone to work and would not be back until the evening. She would not say where he was working.

The Inquirer also tried to reach the ambassador's eldest son, Jean Henri Lhuillier, at his PJL Lhuillier office, but his secretary said he was at a meeting.

On Tuesday, Hector Jimenez, corporate affairs manager of PJL Lhuillier Inc., the holding company of Cebuana Lhuillier chain of pawnshops, met with this reporter apparently on the instructions of the ambassador.

Jimenez said the ambassador was busy attending to several official functions in Italy, but was interested to know about the complaint.

Jimenez also said he did not know where Andre was.

He asked that the Inquirer defer publication of the story for a day to allow him time to contact the ambassador so he could come out with a statement.

Jimenez had not called or issued a statement as of press time yesterday.

A check with the Department of Foreign Affairs showed that Guingona has already ordered that Humber's letter be transmitted to Lhuillier.

Justice Secretary Hernando Perez has sent Humber's request to the DOJ legal office under Dolly Eugenio.

Erap: All I need . . .

From page A1

to escape (prosecution) or seek exile."

He repeated his assurance that he would return to the country to a group of minority congressmen who visited him last night at the Veterans Memorial Medical Center, where he is detained.

He said the Macapagal administration had actually offered him the chance to leave the country three times, in January and February 2001, but said he refused each time.

He even joked about the idea of returning after the operation with his guests, which included Rep. Agapito Aquino, Didagen Dilangalen, Abraham Mitra, Constantino Jaraula and Emmylou Talino-Santos.

"I will come back on one condition," he told Aquino, brother of slain opposition leader Benigno Aquino Jr.

"That I will not go through the tarmac," Estrada said, alluding to the scene of Aquino's 1983 assassination.

"There is no doubt that he will come back," Dilangalen said. Mitra said that after talking to Estrada, he was "100-percent sure" that he would return.

Signed resolutions

The controversial resolutions—the one in the Senate signed by 19 senators and the one in the House signed by 136 congressmen—will be presented to the Sandiganbayan tomorrow, Estrada's defense lawyers said.

Retired Supreme Court Justice Serafin Cuevas said the defense would introduce the resolutions "merely in support of our motion" requesting permission for the US trip.

Cuevas said his VIP client feels "grateful."

"It somehow lifted his spirits," he said.

Asked how Estrada would "thank" those who signed the resolutions, Cuevas said "it might still be too early to say that."

Ferdie Ramos, a close Estrada aide who regularly attends his Sandiganbayan hearings, said "it already elated him to know that he still has sympathizers, that he's not alone in his misery."

"He was actually stunned (by the number of signatories)," he said, "since we were only expecting that only the opposition senators will sign, particularly in the Senate."

Another Estrada lawyer, Raymund Fortun, said his jailed ex-president "is happy (about the resolutions) but he knows they have no bearing in his case and that the court will still decide on the merits."

GMA reaction

For the nth time, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday refused to comment on Estrada's bid to go to the United States for surgery.

Ms Macapagal insisted she would not meddle in matters pending before an independent body like the Sandiganbayan.

"My primary role is not as titular head of Lakas and the People Power Coalition (but) as President," she told Bombo Radyo yesterday.

"Since my party mates have already spoken, I don't want to meddle anymore in partisan matters because it's more important that I uphold my role as President," she went on.

She preferred to focus on the country's problems rather than get involved in issues facing other branches of government, she added.

"I think our priority should be how to eradicate poverty. There are so many things I have to do so that's where my focus is," she said.

She complained that media organizations appeared to be ignoring her efforts.

"That's what I would want to see in the headlines, the two million jobs we were able to create during our first year, and not the commentaries of this and that politician," she said.

At the VMMC, Estrada recalled that before he left Malacañang, Ms Macapagal's emissary Renato de Villa had offered him the chance to leave for a country of his choice. Later, Estrada said now Justice Secretary Hernando Perez also offered him freedom, provided that he sign a voluntary letter of resignation. Perez later offered a "backdoor exit" for him.

"I would have become a fugitive," Estrada said in Filipino.

Mitra said Estrada had also assured them that he would come back because he had to take care of his ailing 96-year-old mother.

"That's enough assurance that he would come back," Mitra said.

Rep. Gabrielle Calizo, one of the signatories, said that Estrada's only interest was to have his knees treated.

"If he wanted to get out of the country, he would have taken that option when there were negotiations for him to leave. It's really just his knees because he is already limping," Calizo said.

Chavit's warning

Meanwhile, militant groups yesterday urged senators and congressmen to heed the warning of former Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson that Estrada would not return.

The militant fisherfolk group Pamalakaya asked senators and congressmen to recall their endorsement of resolutions allowing Estrada to seek medical treatment in the United States.

Singson, interviewed by the Inquirer in Vigan City on Tuesday, said Estrada was "acting again so he (can) go to the United States, but he will not return."

"He will use all his resources to permanently stay in the US," Singson said.

Rodolfo Sambajon, Pamalakaya chair, said the Senate and House of Representatives should consider Singson's warning.

"He's the whistle-blower, he was once part of the Erap mafia, he knows what is in Estrada's mind," said Sambajon.

Civil society groups that participated in People Power II led by PlunderWatch, formerly the Estrada Resign Movement, staged a picket yesterday in front of the Senate, to urge senators to withdraw their signatures.

Yesterday, the Equality and Justice for All (E-Just) Movement warned that the move by congressmen and senators to allow Estrada to leave for the United States was a prelude to a political solution to a legal case.

Lawyer Leonard de Vera said that the twin resolutions were part of efforts of both the opposition and the administration camps to buy peace for the Macapagal administration.

"But this is wrong because like oil and water, justice and politics can't mix. The very nature of politics is compromise. We can't compromise criminal cases," he said.

De Vera said the twin resolutions, if heeded by the Sandiganbayan, would allow justice "to be sacrificed before the altar of politics."

Ombudsman Aniano Desierto, the lead prosecutor in the Estrada trial, earlier expressed strong objections to the resolutions, saying it would somehow put pressure on the court to reconsider its decision junking Estrada's petition.

Desierto said the petition, if approved by the court, would impede the prosecution of Estrada since it would place him outside its jurisdiction. "Whatever the decision on the cases, the court can't promulgate (and implement it) in his presence," Desierto said.

Court surprise

But in a surprising twist in Estrada's plunder hearing yesterday, the court brought up a long-unresolved motion by the prosecutors to have Estrada and co-accused son Jinggoy returned to their previous detention center at Fort Sto. Domingo in Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

It was a motion the special court inherited from the Third Division which originally handled the plunder case.

After division chair Associate Justice Minita Nazario asked the defense to file their reply to the motion, another justice, Edilberto Sandoval, asked the defense panel: "How about the Quezon City jail?"

A visibly surprised Rene Saguisag, another defense lawyer, said "security concerns" must be addressed first, saying it would be "the first time" a prominent person would be detained at a city jail instead of a police or military camp.

He dared the prosecution to go ahead and "make an example" out of Estrada by putting him at the congested QC jail.

In an off-court interview later, Saguisag said those who would like to move Estrada to the city jail should first "consider the polycentric implications of such a move."

"They can proceed at their own risk," he said. ***With reports from Dona Pazzibugan, Gerald G. Lacuarta, Michael Lim Ubac, AFP, Reuters***

Sex course suspended over orgy claims

From page A1

available for comment.

The suspension came after the campus newspaper Daily Californian revealed details of the field trip at the end of last year during which some students allegedly had public sex and others took photographs of their genitalia at a strip club.

A student enrolled in the course told the paper that an orgy occurred during a party hosted by a student teacher following the field trip.

"There was an orgy at one of the parties," student Christy Kovacs was quoted as saying. "And after we (left the) strip club, people (at the party) took Polaroid pictures of their genitalia."

The pictures were later put in a box and students were invited to match the genitalia to their owners, the paper said.

"It was just a fun, harmless get-together," Kovacs reportedly said.

"Anything weird that did go on was behind closed doors, and no one really knew about it."

But another student claimed that a group of students attending the male sexuality course went to a gay strip club as their final project and watched instructors strip and have sex.

Cards, cops

The course was taught under the university's "democratic education" or "de-cal" program, which is overseen by a university official, but not funded by the institution.

Among other De-cal courses are Blackjack, in which class students are taught how to count cards, and Copwatch, which advises students "how to safely and effectively assert their rights when interacting with the police."

Students participating in the course, which also includes a class on female sexuality, said it was intended to explore sexuality and was not in any way pornographic.

"It was a way of talking freely about sex, of exploring one's body, sexuality and fantasies in a free and open forum," said a 20-year-old woman from southern California.

"It helped me understand men's sexuality better and to be more at ease when talking about and engaging in sex," she added.

Among the highlights of the course, in which students talked freely of their own sexual experiences, were question and answer sessions with a transsexual and a dominatrix. **AFP**

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MANILA
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	FROM VIS.	FROM MIN.
Century Park	P5,180	P6,040
Charterhouse	4,793	5,653
City Garden Hotel – Makati	4,862	5,722
City Garden Suites – Manila	4,564	5,429
City State Tower Hotel	4,523	5,387
Executive Plaza	4,540	5,400
Holiday Inn	4,982	5,842
Horizon Edsa	4,698	5,558

	FROM VIS.	FROM MIN.
Kabayan Hotel	P4,352	P5,217
Las Palmas	4,487	5,347
The Legend Hotel-Manila	4,782	5,642
Lotus Garden Hotel	4,458	5,323
Millennium Plaza	4,487	5,347
Palm Plaza	4,487	5,347
Richmonde Hotel	5,028	5,892
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Beatlemania

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

THIS should really be it for Gerry Peñalosa. Gerry must prove to all and sundry that he cannot only defeat Joel Avila. Gerry must whip Joel convincingly to buoy up his morale in his bid to regain the world crown for the umpteenth time. The March 2 fight at the Makati Coliseum will hold the key of whether or not he can still hack it.

Gerry, who is the WBC international super flyweight champion, is not taking Joel lightly. Gerry trained for months in Baguio for the fight billed as his tuneup for another crack at the world crown being held at the moment by Masamori Tokuyama. It was Tokuyama, that Japan-born North Korean, who head-butted his way to victory against Gerry last year for a gory points decision in Yokohama, Japan.

I covered that fight. From ringside, blood from Gerry's head wounds caused by incessant head butts splattered on my shirt.

I salute manager Rudy Salud's courage to protest Gerry's defeat as WBC head Jose Sulaiman saw merit in the case. In the WBC convention in Thailand last November, Sulaiman upheld Salud and ordered a rematch between Tokuyama and Peñalosa. It can happen within the year.

■

Here's to the son of Manny Benedicto, my golf buddy. Bobby Benedicto (take a bow, Manny), together with teammate William Panlilio, made history in the recent 22nd Toronto World Universities Debating Championship when they became the only Asians to make it to the final round. Some 450 debaters from 110 universities and 38 countries joined the event. Benedicto and Panlilio bested rivals from prestigious universities like Oxford, Cambridge and Sydney. Bobby and William, both from Ateneo, are the reigning national champions. I don't know with William but with Bobby, well, I'm sure he took it from his Mom.

Say mo, Manny?

■

I got a call from Ramon "RJ" Jacinto yesterday, through Ricky Alegre. Ricky, another of my great golf buddies, is now with DZRJ 100 FM and RJTV 29.

"Please join us on Friday?" said RJ, a living legend of Pinoy rock 'n' roll. "The bash will never be complete without you."

Was I flattered.

RJ will unravel tomorrow "Beatlemania Live" at the Save-A-Lot Mall along Pasong Tamo Ext., Makati City. The concert, which starts at 8 p.m., will feature Itchyworms, The Jerks, Bayang Barrios, Skychurch, Perf de Castro, Snafu!, Cookie Chua of Color It Red, Ely Buendia of Eraserheads, Jackie Magno, Richard Merck and RJ and The New Riots.

"Bring your band and let's jam," RJ said. "This one's perfect for all Beatlemaniacs like you and me."

I'd love to be there. But I had to beg off.

I'm flying to Bacolod today to cover the PAL Interclub, the nation's team golf championship, which starts tomorrow with the Seniors event at both the Bacolod Golf & Country Club and Negros Golf & Country Club. It's become a tradition for me covering the tournament since I first covered it in 1976 in Cebu.

But the more compelling reason is, my new band Baribaro (short cut for Banda rito, banda roon) has yet to hammer home the final nails to its formation. Tito Talao is brushing up on his Fender (don't you like Rickenbacker, Toti?) and Aldrin Cardona's set of Ludwig drums has a missing Zildjian cymbal.

Give us three months, RJ, and we'll be ready to give you the rockin' and shakin' you and our fellow Beatlemaniacs richly deserve.

That is, if my bandmates at Pub Four will not stop me from forming Baribaro.

FIGHT VS AVILA

Gerry needs stirring win

GERRY Peñalosa needs an impressive victory when he defends the WBC international superflyweight crown against Joel Avila on March 2 at the Makati Coliseum.

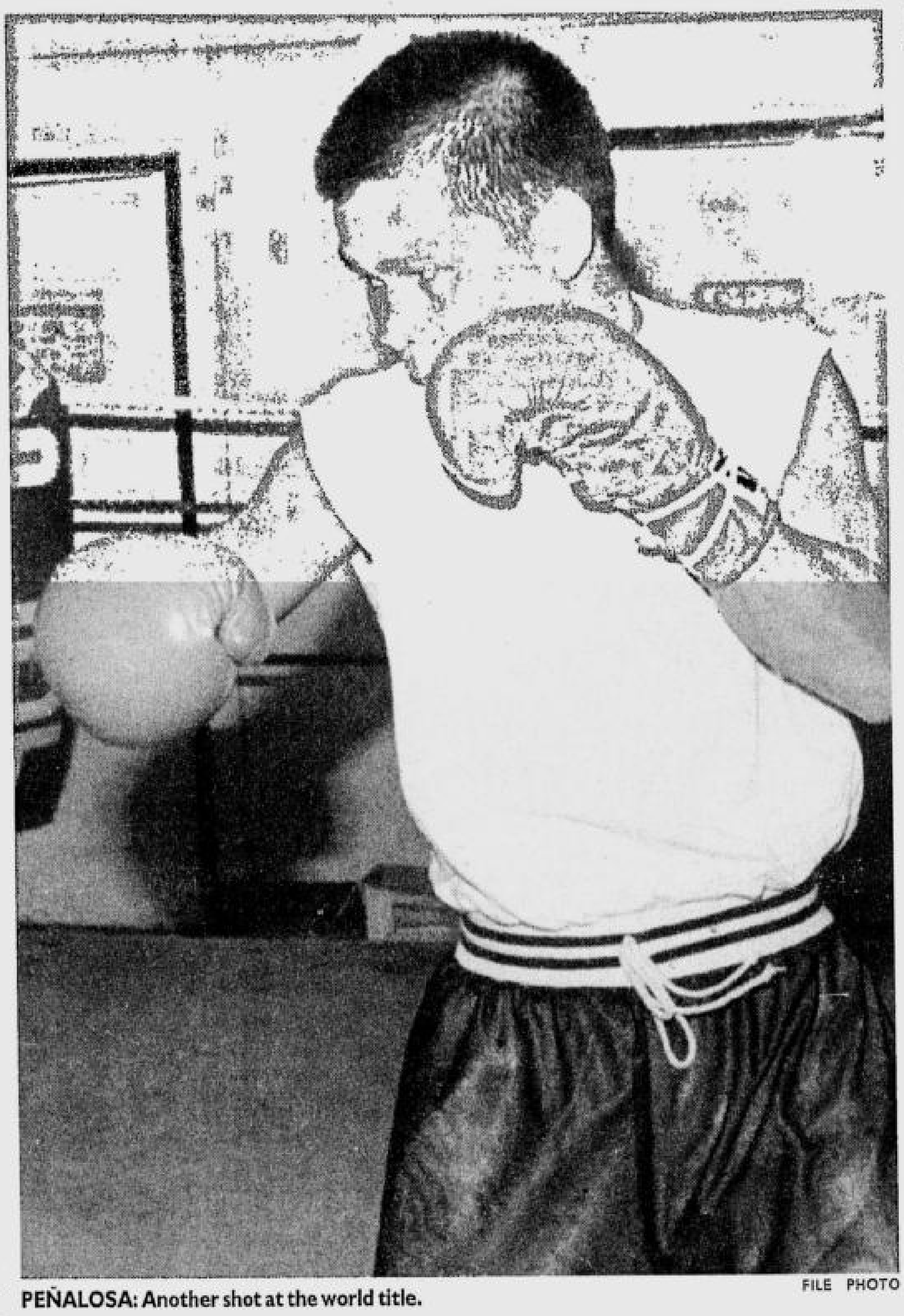
Reason: The fight will be used as a gauge of Peñalosa's readiness to challenge for the WBC title being held by his conqueror, Japan-born North Korean Masamori Tokuyama.

Billed as the "Mayhem in Makati," the fight card will also feature the bout between WBC International bantamweight champion Abner Cordero, fresh from victory in a bloody brawl with Joel Junio in San Fernando, Pampanga, and No. 2 featherweight contender Raffy Aladi, a slugger from Baguio City, over 10 rounds.

Other bouts pit No. 6 light flyweight Gerald Ubatay against Luzon Professional Boxing Association No. 1 Enting Ignacio while undefeated super flyweight contender Rolando Geronco from Cebu City, who is rated No. 8, faces "Flash" Morillo, in two additional 10-round bouts.

Peñalosa returned to Manila yesterday after a training stint at the Baguio City gym of the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines. The former world champion, who has been promised a mandatory shot at the world crown currently held by Tokuyama, looked trim and sharp in sparring sessions with Aladi.

Penalosa said he must win impressively against Avila to be worthy of the title shot promised him by WBC chair Jose Sulaiman who upheld the protest filed by Peñalosa's manager lawyer Rudy Salud, at the last WBC convention in Pattaya, Thailand.



FILE PHOTO

PEÑALOSA: Another shot at the world title.

Bustamante, Andam score

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates—Francisco "Django" Bustamante and Leonardo "Dodong" Andam continued their winning runs Tuesday to advance to the semifinals of the First Fujairah International Billiard Tournament here.

In the semis round Wednesday, the two Puyat Sports-sponsored players met their toughest opponents so far in the 9-ball meet, with Bustamante facing multititled Johnny Archer of the United States and Andam taking on top-ranked world pro Alex Lely of Holland.

Andam defeated Italian Fabio Petroni, 11-6, and Bustamante disposed of Pitugo "Percy" Bartolome, 11-4, on the third day Tuesday of the tournament that offers gold as prizes for the winner and runner-up. Bartolome is a Filipino based in the UAE.

Letran netters beat SSC foes

LETRAN College outplayed San Sebastian College, 2-1, last Tuesday to retain the senior title in the National Collegiate Athletic Association tennis tournament at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center. The Stags of Frederick Morgan took a 1-0 lead after top singles player Niño Salvador prevailed over Menandro Econg, 6-4, 6-5 (ret.).

But the Knights, mentored by Jun Grecia, leveled the count when Cherniel Mantua and Von Ruelan clinched the doubles over Arvin Ruel and Salvador, 6-3, 6-3. Mantua wrapped up the win with a 6-2, 6-4 decision over Ruel in the second singles match.

San Beda College banked on Emerson Ocampo and Borgs Solpico to beat Mapua Institute of Technology, 2-1, for third place.

The Red Lions, handled by Jovy Mamawal, trailed 0-1 when Ocampo lost the first singles to Raffy Santiago, but rallied behind Ocampo and Solpico's 6-1, 6-2 doubles victory and Solpico's 6-4, 6-4 second singles win over Elint Almiron.

College of St. Benilde, coached by Timothy Alcos, outclassed Letran, 3-0, a sweep of the junior title.

Irwin de Guzman won over Miguel Narvaez, 2-6, 6-0, 7-5; De Guzman and Lawrence Magaway defeated Michael Basco and Boris Chavez, 7-6, 6-2; and Jandrick de Castro won by default over Basco.

Walker lifts Celts past Lakers; Kidd sparkles

LOS Angeles—Antoine Walker's 3-pointer in the final 1.2 seconds capped a comeback that gave Boston a 109-108 win over the Los Angeles Lakers.

Kobe Bryant made a jump shot from the right baseline, but after a brief conference, the officials ruled he didn't release the ball until after time expired.

Walker scored from the left wing to cap a 30-point, 14-rebound, 10-assist night—his second triple-double of the season.

Paul Pierce had 33 points and eight rebounds as the Celtics handed the Lakers their first three-game losing streak since Phil Jackson became their coach before the 1999-2000 season.

Bryant had 27 points and nine assists, while Shaquille O'Neal, playing his first game in 16 days, had 25 points and 17 rebounds.

Nets 123, Warriors 115

Jason Kidd had 26 points, 12 assists and 12 rebounds for his league-high sixth triple-double, and 44th of his career Tuesday, to lead the New Jersey Nets to a 123-115 victory over the Golden State Warriors.

Lucious Harris added 19 points as New Jersey finished with seven players in double figures to win their third consecutive game and send the Warriors to their eighth successive road loss, and 16th in 17 games.

Antawn Jamison and Jason Richardson each had 25 points for Golden State.

The game also featured 190 shots, 100 rebounds, five technical fouls, including two against Warriors forward Danny Fortson that resulted in his ejection in the third quarter.

Rose traded to Bulls

NEW YORK—Jalen Rose and Brad Miller were among seven players involved in a trade Tuesday between the Indiana Pacers and Chicago Bulls.

The Bulls acquired Rose, Travis Best and rookie Norman Richardson, along with a conditional second-round draft pick, in exchange for Miller, Ron Mercer, Ron Artest and Kevin Ollie.

Complete results:

New Jersey 123, Golden State 115; Minnesota 117, Dallas 100; San Antonio 99, Memphis 93, OT; Seattle 103, Phoenix 91; Sacramento 99, Atlanta 79; Boston 109, L.A. Lakers 108. *AP*

W'ton okays Tyson bout

WASHINGTON—The D.C. Boxing and Wrestling Commission on Tuesday took the first step to grant Mike Tyson a license, setting the stage for a possible bout against Lennox Lewis on June 8.

The three-member commission voted 3-0 to move forward with the license. A public hearing will be held March 12, followed by a final vote, but vice chair Michael Brown was confident the license would be granted.

"We're expecting a lot of opposition, but we're expecting a lot of support," Brown said.

After the morning vote, Brown initially said the commission voted to "go ahead and grant" the license. He essentially retracted the statement when he clarified the procedure at an afternoon news conference.

PARRA

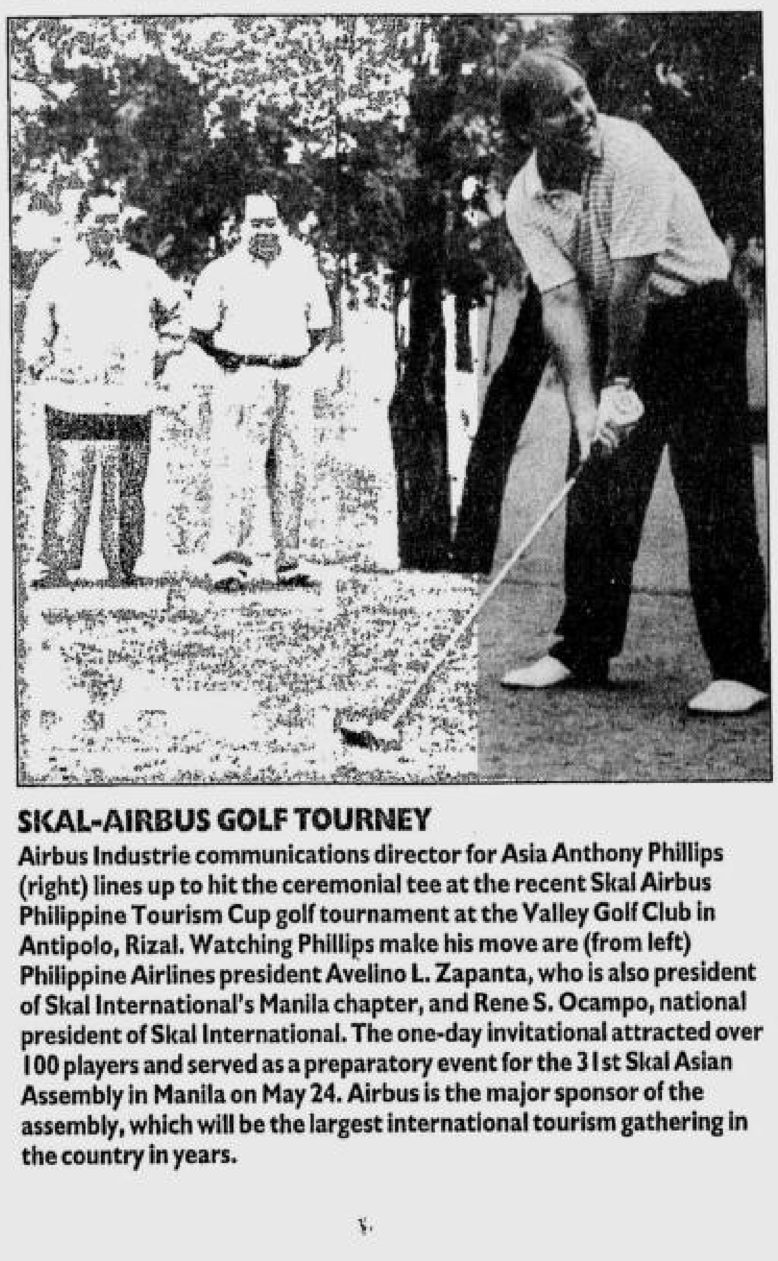
US bet breaks mark

SALT LAKE CITY—Speedskater Derek Parra won a gold medal and broke a world record at the Winter Olympics on Tuesday while his countrywomen's second string team captured the first Olympic title in women's bobsled.

On a great day for the host nation, its women made the final of the ice hockey tournament by blanking Sweden, 4-0, and will now meet defending titlist Canada.

The only negative note for the Americans was that hot favorite and leader Eric Bergoust crashlanded in the the aeriels competition to throw away his title.

Parra's triumph came at the super-fast skating rink at the Utah Olympic Oval which has seen five world records fall in seven days. *AP*



SKAL-AIRBUS GOLF TOURNEY

Airbus Industrie communications director for Asia Anthony Phillips (right) lines up to hit the ceremonial tee at the recent Skal Airbus Philippine Tourism Cup golf tournament at the Valley Golf Club in Antipolo, Rizal. Watching Phillips make his move are (from left) Philippine Airlines president Avelino L. Zapanta, who is also president of Skal International's Manila chapter, and Rene S. Ocampo, national president of Skal International. The one-day invitational attracted over 100 players and served as a preparatory event for the 31st Skal Asian Assembly in Manila on May 24. Airbus is the major sponsor of the assembly, which will be the largest international tourism gathering in the country in years.

RACING TIPS

At Santa Ana

By Mr. 999

Race 1—1. Ohayo Gozaimas/Absolute Power 2. Countess Diana 3. Selectee 4. Counter Strike

Race 2—1. Majistrado 2. Highly Connected 3. Isabel's Gossip 4. Bullish View 5. Pussy Cat

Race 3—1. High and Mighty 2. With Feeling 3. Golden Quest 4. Kayang Kaya 5. Dressed to Impress

Race 4—1. Kay Gee Em Ey 2. Native Talent 3. Best Gift 4. North Shine

Race 5—1. Proud Spirit 2. Sweep Away 3. Talk to Patsy 4. Carolina Belle 5. Aurora Borealis

Race 6—1. Bumper to Bumper 2. Royal Worship 3. Palachik 4. Gifted Galloper 5. Arrogante

Race 7—1. Labuyo/Kingair 2. Bull Dancing 3. Noble House 4. Mr. Lucas 5. Bells of Hope

Race 8—1. Majestic Ruler 2. The Mailman 3. Regal Reality 4. Nag-iisang Ikaw 5. Bull Strike

Race 9—1. Stradivarius 2. Time for Miracles 3. Rainmaker 4. Shot Gun 5. Ladies' Night 6. Ceasar's Inn

Imus hosts junior netfest

IMUS Tennis Club kicks off a heavy 15-leg calendar when it hosts the 2002 Milo Junior Tennis Cup and Regional Workshop on Feb. 23-25 in Cavite.

The Milo netfest, which is organized by the PSA and SCOOP awardee Children's Tennis Workshop (CTW) for the 12th straight year and supported by official outfitter Adidas and Sports Kids, is likewise being conducted under the auspices of Cavite tennis patron Ally David Alarcon.

Featured in the singles events are the boys' and girls' 18-under, 16-under, 14-under, 12-under and the unisex 10-under divisions; and also the doubles events.

Deadline for registration is set at 5p.m. on Friday, Feb. 22 at the Imus Tennis Club with the draw to follow immediately.

The Milo Junior Tennis Cup and Regional Workshop has increased its nationwide junior tennis development program venues to 15 from last year's 11.

CEBU CHALLENGE

Blu forces Game 3 vs Montaña

By Dennis U. Eroa

CEBU CITY—Blu Detergent Kings downed Montaña Jewels with a 73-67 victory, forcing a winner-take-all match in the First CBF-PBL Challenge Cup titular series Tuesday night at the New Cebu Coliseum here.

Hardly showing respect against the team which dominated them in Game One of the best-of-3 championship series, the Detergent Kings started and finished strongly against the Jewels, whose bid to annex their first major title ended in gloom.

"Now, it's back to square one," said Blue coach Leo Isaac as his charges avenged their 75-67 setback Monday night.

The decider between the title-hungry teams is set for Wednesday night.

To the shock of Montaña, Blu transformed overnight into a mean fighting machine. The Detergent Kings moved the ball excellently and caught the Jewels flatfooted with a swarming defense.

Arnold Calo, with his family cheering from the stands, capped a blistering halftime finish for the Detergent Kings with two gift shots, 37-26.

Montaña's woes continued as Jan Alfad, Jayman Misola and Jenkins Mesina missed easy baskets even as Mark Macapagal failed to hit his target when Blu defenders repeatedly beat picks, preventing the three-point demon from having a clear look of the basket.

Earlier, Granny Goose Tortillas subdued Hapee-Toothpaste, 76-67, to finish third in this week-long tournament. The Tortillas won Game One, 85-83, in overtime of the similar best-of-3 series for third.

Scores:

BLU 73—Legaspi 18, Gatumbato 16, Dimaunahan 12, Gottenbos 12, Calo 6, Latoreno 4, Codamon 4, Prior 3.

MONTANA 67—David 13, Macapagal 13, Alfad 11, Kalaw 9, Mesina 9, Misola 5, Valenzona 5, Pua 2, Lim 0.

Quarters: 22-10, 37-26, 59-49, 73-67.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

TODAY in 1990, Bende Lagua beat Allan Madera in 57 moves of a King's Indian defense to capture the Swift "Be A Master" chess tournament at the Metropolitan Chess Club in Makati. Also today in 1992, Selwyn Cabaluna defeated John Villamin in 40 moves of a Reti to bag the second leg of the MCC Executive chess tournament at the Metropolitan Chess Club.

SPORTSWATCH

Abundo Prisaa guest

TERESITA "Tisha" Abundo, founding president of the Federation of Higher Education Sports Associations (FHESA) and the NCRAA, will be the guest of honor in the opening ceremonies of the 2002 Prisaa-Region IV annual athletic meet at 9 a.m. today at the Manuel S. Enverga University Foundation gymnasium in Lucena City. Among those invited to grace the occasion are Lucena City Mayor Ramon Y. Talaga, Romy Cardenas and Nelda C. Reyes. Abundo is being groomed to return to her post as PSC commissioner.

Arnis derby on

MANDALUYONG Coliseum's "5th Ucap/Arnis Master 7-Cock Derby" enters its championship round today featuring more than 60 thrilling fights. Derby sponsors are Sagupaan Super feeds and washout Shampoo. Two out of 37 entries—Firebird MP of hotelier—sportsman Biboy Enriquez and Guts and Glory of Alex Tang/Nelson Co—posted three points each in Tuesday's elimination round. With 2.5 points were Vic Yu (King Boxer) and Ucap president Butch Macasaet (BJ Greenwood I). Derby host is Raymond Velayo. Mandaluyong Coliseum also gears up for a big-time 5-cock derby on March 5 to be hosted by Jimmy Mariquit of Angeles City. For more details, call 531-4003, 531-4005, 534-4110 and 535-2341.

LGBA 6-cocker

RIDING high on the huge success of its stag derby series at Mandaluyong Coliseum last October and November, the Luzon Gamecock Breeders Association (LGBA) launches the "LGBA Cockfighting Conferences" beginning with a 6-cock derby on Feb. 26 and 28. LGBA president Boy Diaz said the 2nd Conference 6-Cock derby is slated for April 23 and 25 while the 3rd Conference Championship 7-Cock Derby is set for May 28 and 30. Participants from as far as Pangasinan, Zambales, Cagayan Valley, Tarlac, Pampanga, Batangas, Laguna, Rizal and Bulacan plus newcomers like former Congressman Amado Bagatsing are competing for top honors. After three conference rounds, the one with the most number of points earned will be adjudged as the "LGBA Cocker of the Year 2002." Providing support to this undertaking are LGBA council members Biboy Enriquez, Dr. Gil Nicolas, Enrique Castillo, lawyer Mario Antonio, engineer Jun Sevilla, Terence Madlamabayan and Romy Tan. Interested parties may contact the LGBA at tel. nos. 635-4799, 911-8996 or 911-2621. Sponsors of the derbies are Lakpue Drug Inc., Univet, Premium Agrovet and Excellence Gamefowl Supply.

Sportsfishing winners

THE LUCENA Sportsfishing Club team 1 of Mike Alcala, Dr. Ping Pajarillo, Aton Tam and Eddie Casino won the Subic Bay Yacht Club-PGFF interclub fishing tournament of the Philippine Game Fishing Foundation supported by SBYC and Vic-Vic Villacencio of the Triple-V Group. PGFF president Rey Buencamino said the full-house event, which saw the participation of Rico Gueco and 69 top anglers from seven fishing clubs, is the second leg of the Angler of the Year series and marks the 3rd Annual SFFP National Fishing Championship of the Sport Fishing Federation of the Philippines, headed by Villavicencio. It was Villavicencio who started the annual fishing interclub 16 years ago.

Water world

By Vic-Vic Villavicencio

COMMENTARY

JOHN F. Kennedy made many memorable speeches. He endeared himself to Berliners with that speech he made while standing in the shadows of the Berlin Wall.

On another occasion, a dinner affair for the yacht crews of the American's cup in Nerwport, USA, Kennedy who was himself a sailing enthusiast, endeared himself to his audience with these unforgettable words:

"I really don't know why it is that all of us are committed to the sea, except I think it's because in addition to the fact that the sea changes, and the light changes, and ships change, it's because we all come from the sea. And it is an interesting biological fact that all of us have, in our veins, the exact same percentage of salt in out blood that exists in the ocean, and therefore, we have salt in our blood, in our sweat, in our tears. We are tied to the ocean. And when we go back to the sea—whether it is to sail or to watch it—we are going back from whence we come."

As the mountain is to the mountain climber, so is the sea to the water sports enthusiast. Fact is , there is really no need for explanations. As one slogan outs it, we just do it.

We go fishing because we love the sporting aspects of it. Sometimes, we even manage to land those big ones and win tournaments. Or set a world record. As did my twin daughters Cara and Mara Villavicencio; and Jessie Cordova for Great Barracuda, and Noel Jones for Pacific Sailfish—both caught in Philippine waters.

We also go sailing, or scuba diving, or jet skiing, or surfing to conquer giant waves of the Pacific Ocean or the South China Sea. Name any water sport, and we have no shortage of opportunities to indulge it. After all, we are a country of over seven thousand islands, year-round sporting weather islands, aren't we?

Come to think of it, the tourism potential for aqua sports is limitless. Would that there were more investors in water sports facilities for local and foreign tourists. And more government encouragement.

Another area for governmental intervention is in environmental protection. Pollution of Philippine waters is approaching crisis proportions. If it is not already there.

The destruction of coral reefs by the illegal use of explosives and chemicals like sodium cyanided continues—with law enforcers, more often than not, doing Pontius Pilate acts about who should do the job.

How embarrassing it must be for a Filipino tour guide to take a group of foreign visitors to fishing or scuba diving sports—events announcements, competition schedules and results, tips on where and how to get there, or even share "secrets" of the champions and experts, all related to activities on or near waters.

And that's a promise.

CASINO FILIPINO OPEN

Miñoza has a new swing

WHEN the eminent Frankie Miñoza returns to the Casino Filipino 87th Philippine Open next month at Wack Wack, he will have a new swing.

For months, Miñoza has been grooving a high-ball producing swing at Del Monte in Bukidnon.

"I need to adjust my swing," he said. "The trend now is to make courses that bounce hard. They are making the greens harder and harder."

The 42-year-old Miñoza won the 1998 Ericsson Philippine Open at Riviera. Due to his hectic schedule in the Japan Tour, he failed to join the next three Opens.

"I have always wanted to play our very own Philippine Open," he said. "It's just that advance commitments in Japan prevented me from doing so. This time, I made sure I would be at Wack Wack."

He reiterated his desire to play when he met up in Cagayan de Oro two weeks ago with Rod Feliciano, president of the organizing National Golf Association of the Philippines.

"I have a high regard for Mr. Feliciano," said Miñoza. "My respect for this gentleman of the first degree will be forever."

Earlier, Miñoza also assured Ben Abalos, Wack Wack president, of his appearance in the Open set for March 7-10 at Wack Wack East.

The P10-million 87th Open will be bankrolled principally by Pagcor through Casino Filipino and San Miguel Beer through Danding Cojuangco.

Mitsubishi will be the official car of the tournament, which is now part of the Davidoff Tour of the Asian PGA.

MIÑOZA

Pagunsan, Dizon among Bangkok leaders

JUVIC Pagunsan and Marlon Dizon fired sizzling rounds Tuesday to power the Philippines to a share of the lead with Korea in team play of the Thailand Amateur Open golf tournament at the Kiarti Thanee Country Club course in Bangkok.

Pagunsan, the reigning Southeast Asian Games champion, played a near-flawless round of five-under-par 67 and Dizon checked in with a 69 as the Filipinos took a piece of the leadership with the Koreans at 136.

The trip is bankrolled by the National Golf Association of the Philippines as part of its preparations for the Asian Games in Busan, Korea.

Pagunsan and Dizon also put themselves in solid contention in the individual battle.

Pagunsan was running second just three behind 17-year-old sensation Hye Dong Kim of Korea who burned the course with a 64.

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SPORTS

Editor **Al S. Mendoza** ◉ Assistant Editor **Edwin M. Villanueva**

Alaska Aces test Selecta's mettle

TEAMS	W	L
Red Bull	2	0
Purefoods	2	0
Alaska	1	0
Selecta-RP	1	0
Hapee-RP	1	0
Shell	1	1
Coke	1	1
San Miguel	0	1
Talk N Text	0	1
Sta. Lucia	0	1
Ginebra	0	2
FedEx	0	2

TUESDAY'S RESULT:
Purefoods d. Ginebra, 60-58

GAME TODAY
(Makati Coliseum)
6 p.m.—Selecta-RP Team vs Alaska

By June Navarro

SELECTA-RP Team tests Alaska's mettle as both teams jockey for a share of the top spot with Red Bull and Purefoods today in the PBA Samsung Governors Cup at the Makati Coliseum.

The Aces registered a stirring 68-63 victory against the Barangay Ginebra Kings last week without the help of top gunners Kenneth Duremdes and Ali Peek.

Duremdes and Peek won't be around again for the Aces in the 6 p.m. setto but instead they will go up against their mother team as members of the Selecta-RP Team.

Although hampered by injuries when the national team candidates shaded San Miguel Beer, 68-63, in the same venue last week, Duremdes and Peek will try to suit up this time against the Aces.

A victory for either squad will position them side by side with Red Bull and Purefoods, teams which enjoy the view from the top with 2-0 records.

Rodney Santos will again lead the fight for the Aces, who also got solid performances from Ron Riley and John Arigo.

It was the 6-foot-2 Santos who delivered the lethal blows to the Kings after scoring seven crucial points in the dying moments during the Aces' come-from-behind victory.

Selecta-RP Team will pin its hopes on Dennis Espino, Asi Taulava, Dondon Hontiveros, Poch Junio and Olsen Racela.

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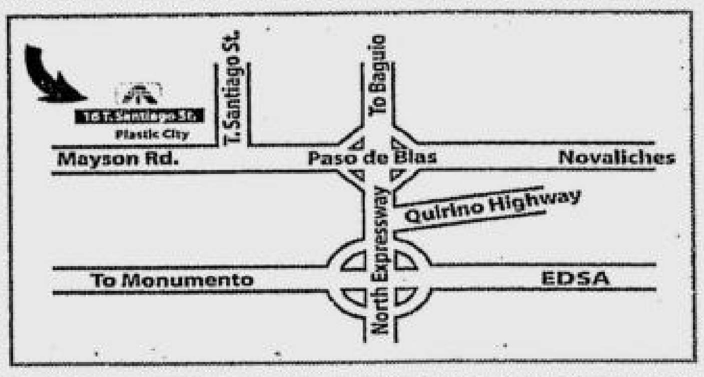
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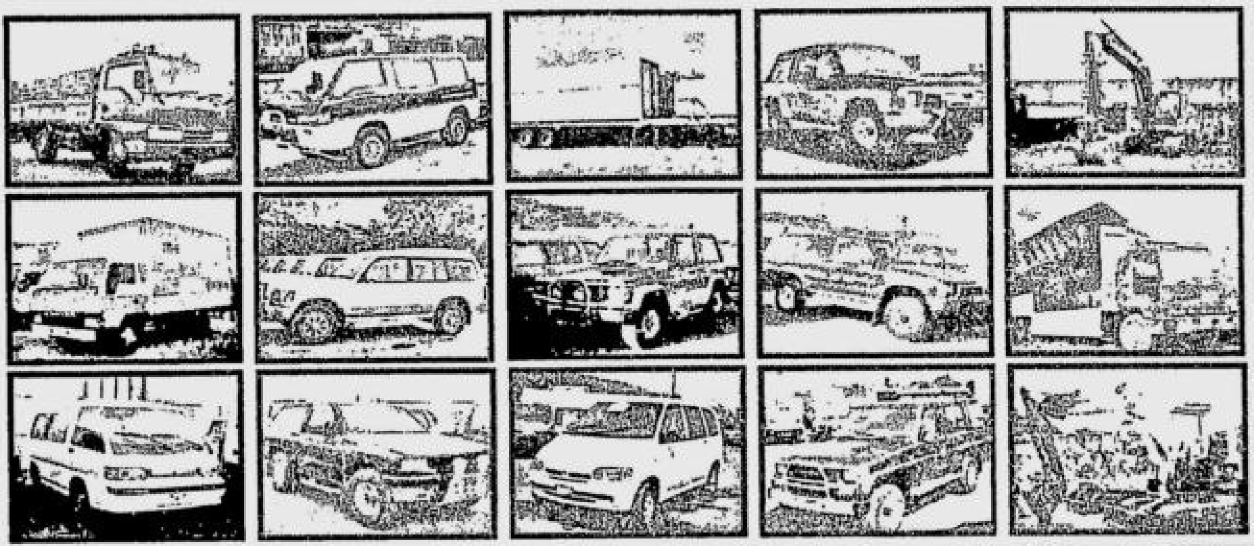

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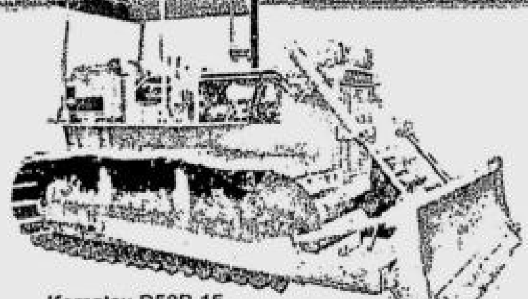
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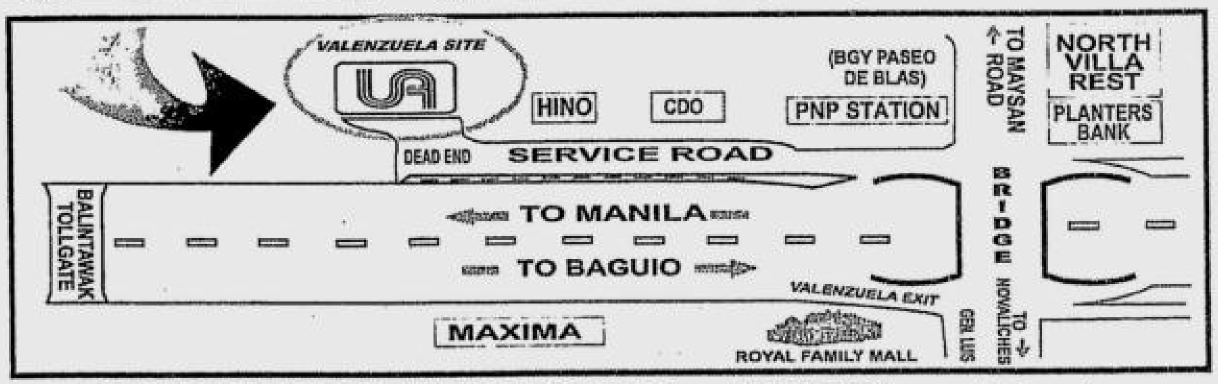
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FLIGHT UPDATES

Kitefest Info Bits:

The country's biggest and longest running kite flying festival, BEAR BRAND Kitefest actually started 12 years ago at the historic Rizal Park. This year, it will tour 10 key cities from Luzon to Mindanao.

Because of its nationwide exposure, the BEAR BRAND Kitefest has been enjoyed by families from the different regions all over the country. In fact, the biggest recorded participant turnout was outside Metro Manila, with over 1,000 kite entries at the BEAR BRAND Kitefest in Davao.

Watch out for BEAR BRAND Kitefest 2002! Happening next at the Leyte Sports Complex (Grandstand), Tacloban City on February 24,2002.

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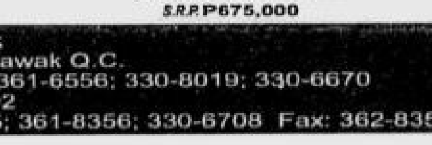
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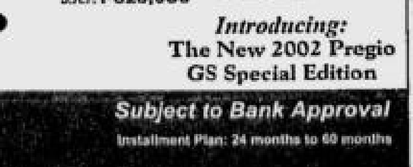
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METRO

Editor Louie C. Camino

Fire in San Mateo

AN UNATTENDED candle caused a 50-minute fire to break out on the second floor of a 2-storey residence on GSIS Street, Daang Bakal, Gitnang Bayan II, San Mateo, Rizal. No one was reported hurt in the fire that gutted the house of Reynaldo Angeles late Tuesday night, fire investigators said. FO1 Ricky Flores pegged property damage at P50,000. *Nelson Flores*

'Report extorting traffic personnel'

By Alcuin Papa

A TOTAL of 10 traffic enforcers of the Makati Department of Public Safety were suspended yesterday, nearly a week after they were arrested for alleged robbery and extortion.

Makati City Mayor Jejomar Binay handed down the suspension order as he directed the city's legal department to prepare the proper administrative charges against the enforcers.

"There is no room for crooks in uniform in Makati," Binay said in a statement yesterday.

He also urged motorists to immediately report to his office, the public safety department or the police, any traffic personnel involved in extortion activities.

The suspended traffic enforcers were identified as Ludrigo Sangrones, Roberto Jara, Ryan Austerio, Romeo Cajepe, Aida Catalan, Joselito Cristino, Jose Cruz, Ricardo De Guzman, Rolando Lambit and Rodrigo Severino, the alleged leader of the group.

The suspension came after a complaint last week was filed by Marlene Pacinas, of Atainan Street, Alcala, Pangasinan.

In her complaint, De Pacinas said she and her driver were traveling on the South Superhighway when they were flagged down by a group of traffic enforcers headed by Severino last Feb. 11 at around 12:30 p.m.

De Pacinas said the enforcers falsely accused her of violating the law on smoke belching vehicles.

But Severino told De Pacinas that she and her driver will not be charged if they pay P500. She reluctantly gave the money.

Right after the incident, De Pacinas went to the Southern Police District and reported the extortion incident to the desk.

Members of the Counter Intelligence Special Unit arrested the enforcers on the same day.

Of the 10, only four are still in the Makati City jail, while the others have posted bail.

Makati City has a total of 256 traffic personnel assigned to direct traffic flow in the city.

Most of them are deployed in the city's central business district.

In Manila, police on Monday arrested two security guards for taking P1 million worth of cellular phones from a Globe Telecom business center in Makati City Sunday.

Police said Louie Castro, 30, of Binoy Street, Balut, Tondo, Manila, and Arthur Bandojo, 32, of Rawis Sambayanan Street, Don Bosco, Makati City, were arrested about 10 p.m. Monday at their hideout on P. Ortega Street, Tondo.

The suspects were former guards of the Globe Telecoms business center in Park Square 1 on Pasay Road, Makati.

According to PO3 Reymond Bilgera of the Makati City Police theft and robbery section, 48 cell phones worth about P1 million were taken from the Globe Telecoms center on Sunday.

Guards on duty were able to furnish police with the descriptions of the burglars. This led to the arrest of the two suspects and the recovery of some of the stolen phones.

Castro and Bandojo admitted to Western Police District investigators that they stole the phones. They also told police poverty drove them to rob the store and that they mean to ask forgiveness from the store's owners.

MAKATI mayor Jejomar Binay has just sacked 10 traffic enforcers. FILE PHOTO

ON TARGET: All right, Ping? A20

ALIGE: Putting life into poverty alleviation A20

ATIENZA: 'Very disappointed' with city cops A20

Student tribunal finds former UP regent guilty of malversation A20

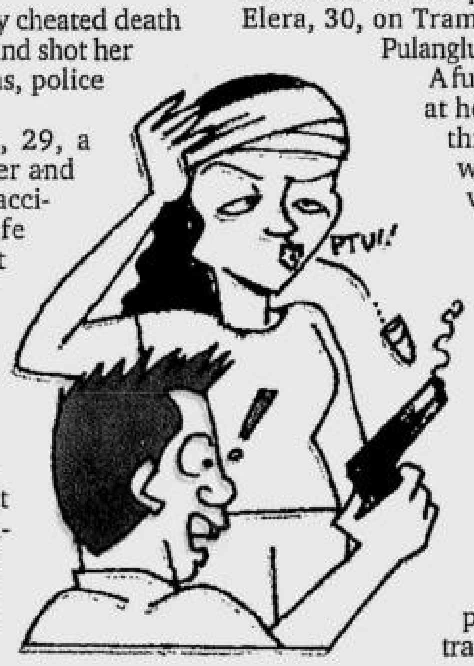
Woman shot, spits out bullet

By Christian V. Esguerra

A WOMAN miraculously cheated death Tuesday after her husband shot her in the head in Las Piñas, police said.

Suspect Kirby Tan, 29, a former overseas worker and now a tricycle driver, accidentally shot his wife Anabelle, 29, about 11:30 a.m., said SPO4 Ben Javier.

The bullet entered the victim's left temple and exited in Anabelle's mouth. Las Piñas District Hospital doctors did not bother removing the bullet from her because Anabelle virtually spat out the slug, Javier said.



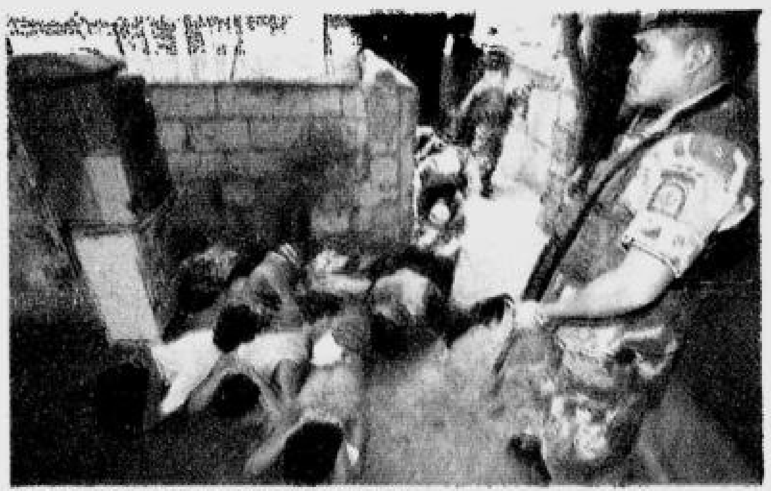
Police said Anabelle caught her husband in the house of his supposed mistress, Myra Elera, 30, on Tramo Street in Barangay Pulanglupa.

A fuming Anabelle charged at her husband, who then threatened to shoot her with a .38-caliber revolver, investigation showed.

The gun suddenly went off when Anabelle tried to ward away the hand holding the gun, police said.

Tan then rushed his wife to the Las Piñas District Hospital.

Police later arrested Tan at the hospital on charges of frustrated homicide.



WITH THEIR HEADS BOWED

No one knew how long the inmates of the Manila City Jail South Area, most of whom are Muslims, had to lie like this on the floor and suffer more degradation, as members of a special police unit yesterday searched their cells for arms and drugs. JESS YUSON

Taguig dads behind casino bill, says town official

By Christian V. Esguerra

COUNCILORS associated with Taguig Mayor Sigfrido Tinga are behind the "ghost" resolution authorizing the construction of a hotel-casino in Global City, another councilor admitted yesterday.

Councilor Obet Dionisio, chair of the committee on games and amusement, said majority of the members of the municipal council sponsored the controversial resolution, which has received heavy criticisms from church groups.

Dionisio refused to identify the councilors, saying "their political careers are at stake here."

Identifying the councilors, he added, will be "immaterial" since "the resolution will most likely die at the committee level," what with the growing public opposition.

He also claimed Tinga probably did not know about the resolution when it was submitted last year, since the municipal council is independent from the mayor's office.

Dionisio's committee is now conducting a series of public hearings to determine if Taguig residents favor the controversial construction of a hotel-casino.

But even before the committee got the "mysterious" resolution last October, church groups have been opposing the project, warning it would breed immorality and corruption.

Dionisio appealed for sobriety from protesters and asked them to wait for the result of the public hearings.

"In the first place, we could have approved the resolution without consulting the public," he said. "Still, in the interest of transparency, we conducted the hearings."

Dionisio also claimed it is the Philippine Realty and Holding Corp.—not the councilors—which has been pushing for the casino project.

According to the municipal resolution, the corporation owns the property at Global City in Fort Bonifacio, where the hotel-casino is supposed to rise.

WAZZZZUP? ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

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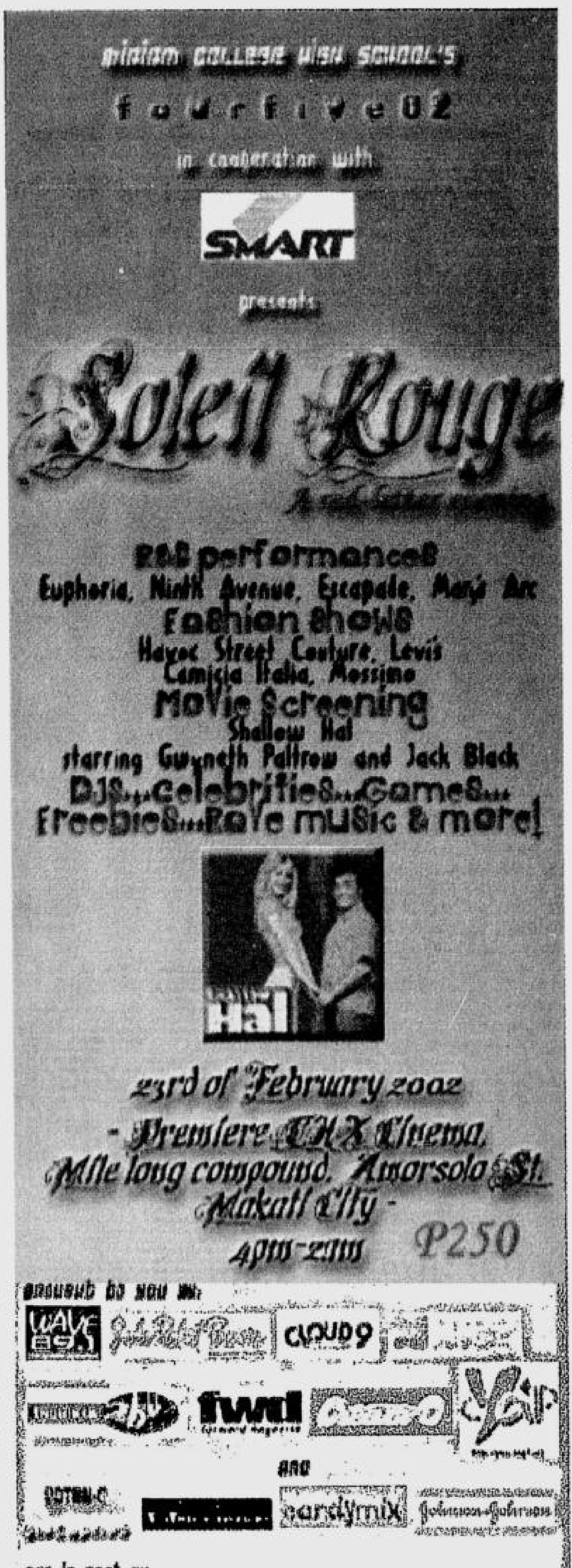

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Atienza 'very disappointed' with cops

By Philip C. Tubeza

DO something drastic!

An incensed Manila Mayor Lito Atienza yesterday fired off this order to Western Police District Director Chief Supt. Nicolas Pasinos Jr. over the increasing number of foreign tourists being victimized by criminals in the country's premier city.

Atienza swore he is particularly alarmed that even policemen are themselves mulcting tourists.

"Before it gets any worse, Pasinos should do something drastic about this. This really worries me," Atienza said.

He said he is "very disappointed" with reports that Manila policemen are themselves involved in blackmailing tourists.

On Sunday, a Saudi Arabian national complained that six policemen, including the head of a community police precinct in Ermita, tried to extort $1,500 from him after he was accused of having a stick of marijuana.

Before that, more than 10 tourists had asked police assistance after they were victimized by petty criminals in Manila.

The WPD was supposed to deploy two more police battalions in downtown Manila to increase police visibility and deter criminals from preying on tourists. The police district is also set to create a special unit to deal with crimes involving foreigners.

"I'm calling attention to this. This is a very sad reflection of the condition of our police force," Atienza said.

In a press forum last week, Pasinos admitted that there were bad eggs among his men while adding that he was trying his best to "marginalise" them.

"Let's face it, there are many abusive policemen. But what can we do? We have limitations," Pasinos said.

The crime 'show' goes on

A JAPANESE tourist ended Y300,000 poorer after a female member of the notorious "Salisi Gang" befriended him and stole his clutch bag while making small talk at a popular mall in Ermita, Manila the other night.

Police identified the complainant as Yasuhiko Yamamoto, 49, married, of Tokyo and presently billeted at Room 1015 of the Copacabana Hotel at Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City.

Stolen from him was a black clutch bag containing some Y300,000, two Japanese tickets and a Philippine Airlines (PAL) ticket for Japan.

Yamamoto said he was looking for toys at the third floor level of the Robinsons Department Store, located at P. Faura, Ermita, when a comely teenager approached and befriended him at around 6 p.m.

The girl invited the complainant to sit on a nearby bench and began making small talk about Yamamoto's visit to the country.

After a few minutes, the girl stood up and, after thanking the complainant for his time, hurriedly left the area.

The victim next discovered that his black clutch bag containing some Y300,000 yen and other valuables was missing.

Meanwhile, the Japanese government is not likely to lift its travel advisory on the Philippines soon, especially after what happened to one of its university lecturers in Manila the other day.

Akira Ishii, 64, lost a laptop computer and several computer accessories worth P150,000 after giving a lecture sponsored by the Department of Health at the Pan Pacific Hotel in Malate.

Elsewhere in Manila, two other Japanese tourists fell victim to thieves who made off with their belongings. ***Philip Tubeza***

All right, Ping?

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

SEN. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson, the most prominent member of Philippine Military Academy Class 1971, wrote a lengthy article published on the front page of the Malaya (Sunday, Feb. 17 issue) about the honor code of a PMA cadet.

Lacson says that he still adheres to the PMA cadet's honor code 31 years after graduating from the premier military school.

Basically, the code enjoins a cadet not to cheat or lie, and if he sees a fellow cadet violating the code he should immediately tell on the offending cadet. A cadet caught violating the code is immediately dismissed from the academy.

***

On the PMA campus, a cadet going back to his barracks after a day spent in the "outside world" is challenged by the guard at the gate with these words: "All right, sir?"

It's a password that tests a cadet's honesty—to himself and to the honor system. The password determines whether the cadet broke the rules given to him before he went off campus. Some rules vary from time to time but the "constants" are: a cadet while on pass should not drink alcoholic beverages; he should not take drugs; he should not go to forbidden areas, such as prostitution joints.

The same challenge is given by the guard to cadets about to retire for the night. "All right sir?" means "did you take alcohol; did you take drugs; did you haze or beat up a junior cadet; did you go to 'off limit' areas on campus like restaurant or mess hall to forage for food; did you visit another room during a particular hour?"

The question "did you go to off-limit areas like the mess hall" is often violated by plebes (first year cadets) because they can hardly eat during regular meals due to harassment from their upperclassmen.

***

If the cadet has not defied any one of the rules set for a particular hour, his expected reply is, "All right, sir."

However, if he broke any one of the rules, he should say, "No sir, it's not all right." He gets a lighter penalty.

If he lied and he is found out, he will be tried by an honor committee composed of his peers. The punishment is outright dismissal.

A cadet who abets cheating or lying a fellow cadet is equally liable under the honor code. Punishment. outright dismissal.

***

Lacson, apparently invoking the cadet honor system during a Senate committee hearing, asked fellow PMAer Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes whether he was telling the truth by mentioning the PMA password. Reyes was being grilled by Lacson at the time.

Reyes shot back: "I'm under oath, your honor."

***Supalpal si* Lacson! The defense secretary, in effect, told off the neophyte senator that an oath far surpasses the cadet's honor code.**

***

But Lacson seemed to have misunderstood Reyes (Class ' 66), who graduated five years ahead of him at the PMA. He apparently thought that Reyes avoided the challenge ``All right, sir?" by not giving him the expected reply of ``All right, sir."

Mukhang may kabobohan itong si Ping Lacson. In his lofty position he should know that the PMA cadet's honor code can never supersede an oath.

Listen to what Lacson said in his Malaya article about that incident in the Senate:

"When I 'challenged' Cavalier Reyes (a PMAer addresses another as Cavalier—RT) and he refused to answer, I knew that he still values the Honor System. I was sure that integrity and honor still reign in his heart...When a cavalier is not one hundred percent sure that everything that he does or says is absolutely honest and true, it is most honorable to refuse to answer."

***

In effect, Lacson was saying that Secretary Reyes was lying before the Senate committee, that's why he refused to answer the senator's challenge of "All right, sir?"

***Ang babaw mo naman,* Cavalier Ping! *Sinabi na sa iyong* under oath *siya*, but that did not have any effect on you!**

What Lacson was implying was that he was always guided by the PMA honor code.

But is he?

***

Since I'm a pseudo-PMAer—being an adopted member of PMA Class 1967—I now invoke my being a "cavalier" to Ping. Therefore, it's now my turn to issue the challenge, "All right, sir?, to the following questions:

- Didn't you order the abduction and murder of publicist Bubby Dacer and his driver, Emmanuel Corbito? If you didn't did you learn afterwards about what your men did to Dacer and Corbito?
- Didn't you violate the human and constitutional rights of detainees while you were at the dreaded Metrocom Intelligence and Security Group (MISG) of the defunct Philippine Constabulary?
- Didn't you order the rubbing off of an MISG detainee Reginald Hill, whose wife was Alice Hill? Isn't Alice Hill now Mrs. Alice Lacson?
- Didn't you rob a dead kidnap suspect of his very expensive Patek Philippe watch when you were still a young lieutenant?
- Didn't you kick two women out of a helicopter flying over Manila Bay because they happened to be the sister and niece of Alfredo "Joey" de Leon, leader of the notorious Red Scorpion kidnap-for-ransom gang?
- Didn't you order the killing of the boyfriend of a pretty ramp model because you wanted his girl for yourself?
- Didn't you order the liquidation of 11 members of the notorious Kuratong Baleleng gang because you and your cohorts wanted to get for yourselves the US$2 million confiscated from them?

If you can, without batting an eyelash, reply to all of those questions with "All right, sir," *then bilib na talaga ako sa apog mo!*

In closing, I'll dissect the other things the honorable senator said in his Malaya article. Watch for it in my next column.

ALIGE OF MANDALUYONG

Putting life into poverty alleviation

By Agnes E. Donato

Dr. Cris Reyes, volunteer, on the job.

PHOTOS BY FE LACSAMANA

SURPRISE packages come in all shapes and sizes.

On Feb. 10, a sunny Sunday, it came as a team of medical workers that healed, brought hope, medicine, food and joy to residents of a depressed community in Mandaluyong City.

Amazed residents swore that the last time such a concerned, caring group had come to their place was over a decade ago.

The poor residents had given up hope of seeing what preaching traditional politicians love to call poverty alleviation.

But the tired promise was realized right in their midst.

Two doctors (Crispino Reyes and John-John Trinidad), two dentists (Ding Dualat and Priscilla Cueva) and a nurse (Airene Rafols)— all volunteers— gave free medical care, advice and dental service to the residents living in the area right at the back of the Mandaluyong Cemetery, or simply "Backside."

Free medicines donated by the Astra Xenica Philippines and sportsman Franchino Pamintuan were also distributed to the patients.

Amelia Alvaro, 38, a Backside resident, said she was grateful that the Alige association, composed mostly of senior citizens from Barangay Vergara, sponsored the medical mission to reach out to the less fortunate residents of the barrio.

At least 200 poor residents were benefited.

Alvaro, who brought her asthmatic four-year-old son for check-up, said she and her husband had wanted to bring the boy to a doctor but they could not afford it.

"The company where my husband used to work closed down in 1999, leaving him unemployed for two years," Alvaro related.

"He got a job as a messenger only recently and his meager income is just enough for our basic needs," she added.

According to Elmo Banzuela, an energetic Alige member and known civic worker, most of his neighbors in Backside were either unemployed or contractual workers.

The younger group, on the other hand, was made up mostly of dropouts who could not afford an education even from the public schools.

Civic leader Nandy Charvet, a Mandaluyong resident who tapped his friends in the medical profession and the pharmaceutical industry, said he found the outreach program a worthwhile undertaking because poor people did not usually have health in their priority list.

CORE members of the Alige association pause after successful mission

"Besides, it is very inconvenient for people to go to government hospitals where they still have to line up and go through the bureaucracy just to get a check-up," Charvet said.

He added that, for a long time, poverty alleviation has been a mere "lip service" among politicians and other sectors who claim to serve the poor.

But he maintained that so much more could be done if people stayed away from politics and helped one another even on their own level.

Also a positive result of forming civic organizations, according to Charvet, is the maintenance of peace and order.

"People tend to protect one another when they see that their neighbors care for them. A heightened sense of community grows among them," he explained.

The Alige group was formed with only a dozen members last April. At present, it has over 50 members and a number of accomplishments, all for the benefit of residents in Barangay Vergara.

Among its previous projects was the construction of steel railings outside the Isaac Lopez Elementary School to protect school children.

The group, with the assistance of Dr. Lucila Bargo, also worked for the immediate closure of a fiberglass factory that emitted toxic fumes which threatened the health of residents in Vergara and nearby communities.

Alige member Eddie Nelly said his group is now eyeing as its next project the completion of a half-built skills training center at the Backside community.

Also being lined up is the rehabilitation of the Vergara public playground that has been neglected and reduced into a messy parking lot.

All told, members of Alige (crustacean fat) wanted to send the message that the crab, instead of symbolizing selfishness and greed, could signify love and cooperation.

A bigger medical and dental mission, courtesy of Lions Clubs International, District 3001-B1, Obando, Lions Club, Philippines, has been lined up in Vergara proper on March 3.

Student tribunal finds former UP regent guilty of malversation

By Agnes Donato

A FORMER University of the Philippine student regent is facing expulsion after the UP Student Disciplinary Tribunal found her guilty of embezzling P15 million in public funds.

Hannah Serana, a BA Political Science student in the UP Cebu campus, was found culpable of willful and deliberate gross misconduct resulting in the malversation of public funds, machination, and false representation.

Serana was also proven guilty of grave abuse of authority and discourtesy to UP officials during her term as student regent in 2000.

UP President Francisco Nemenzo said the SDT decision did not have to go through the customary review by the Board of Regents, the latter being the complainant against Serana.

Serana's successor, former Student Regent Kristine Claire Bugayong, welcomed the SDT decision and said it was "only just."

Bugayong however noted that nothing had happened so far with the separate case she had filed against Serana with the Ombudsman on Feb. 6 2001.

The Ombudsman case was filed a couple of weeks after Bugayong got a phone call from the Presidential Management Staff of then President Estrada inquiring about the status of the renovation project of the Vinzons Hall Annex.

She went to Malacañang and found out that Serana had personally proposed to Estrada to turn the building into the "President Joseph Ejercito Estrada Student Building."

The PMS released a P15-million check for the plan, which turned out to be a ghost project.

PUP launches Jacob stories

THE POLYTECHNIC University of the Philippines is proud to announce the launching of Prof. Ave Perez Jacob's collection of twenty-seven short stories, Ang Pagdating Ni Elias Plaridel At Iba Pang Piling Mga Kwento, on Feb. 28 at the Amphitheater of the University's Mabini Campus in Sta. Mesa, Manila.

PUP President Dr. Ofelia M. Carague will grace the occasion as main speaker.

The book-launching has as major sponsor the Center for Human Development under the Office of the Vice President for Research & Development headed by Dr. Normita A. Villa.

Other co-sponsors of the affair are the College of Arts, Departamento ng Filipinolohiya and the Front for the Recognition of Enlightened Educators (FREE-PUP).

Dr. Normita A. Villa and Director Romulo T. Martin of the OVPRD, Dr. Amalia Rosales, CA Dean, and Prof. Gandhi Cardenas, chair of the Filipino Department, will also deliver speeches on the occasion.

The works of Jacob, in the estimation of his peers, are some of the best, if not the best examples of proletarian literature in Filipino.

Militant and genuine labor leaders, particularly those under the KMU banner, officers and members of fraternal organizations, writers, poets and artists of the masses, have been invited to attend the event which starts at 4 p.m.

UP Economics homecoming

THE UP School of Economics will hold its Grand Alumni Homecoming on Saturday starting at 4 p.m. at the UP School of Economics Building in Diliman, Quezon City.

Graduates from the school's major programs, namely, A.B. Economics, B.S. in Business Economics, the Program for Development Economics (TPDE), the Masteral and Doctoral programs from the School's 37 years are being called "home" to reminisce, renew old friendships and make new ones.

Organized by the graduates of Batches 1974, 1975, 1976 and 1977, the Grand Alumni Homecoming hopes to reach out to the school's earliest and youngest graduates to come home and make the affair memorable.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, February 21, 2002
1st Week of Lent

1st Reading: Es C, 12, 14-16, 23-25
Gospel: Mt 7:7-12

Jesus said to his disciples, "Ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened. For everyone who asks, receives; whoever seeks, finds; and the door will be opened to him who knocks. Would any of you give a stone to your son when he asks for bread? Or give him a snake, when he asks for a fish? As bad as you are, you know how to give good things to your children. How much more, then, will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

So, do to others whatever you would that others do to you: there you have the Law and the Prophets."

Commentary

You'll get what you ask for. You'll find what you search for. If you knock, there's going to be a response.

You're going to watch TV tonight till you fall asleep? You'll get what you asked for, a head full of junk.

You're trying to live Lent, you're asking God to teach you to pray? You're going to seek and knock? Get ready then—because it's going to happen. God is going to ask you some really exciting questions. Will you be there to listen? Questions like, "What do you really want? What do you really want to search for? What is really worth searching for with all your heart and soul and mind and strength?" These questions will lead you to life. Each day, a step at a time. What did you want today? Did you ask for it? Did you search for it? What happened?

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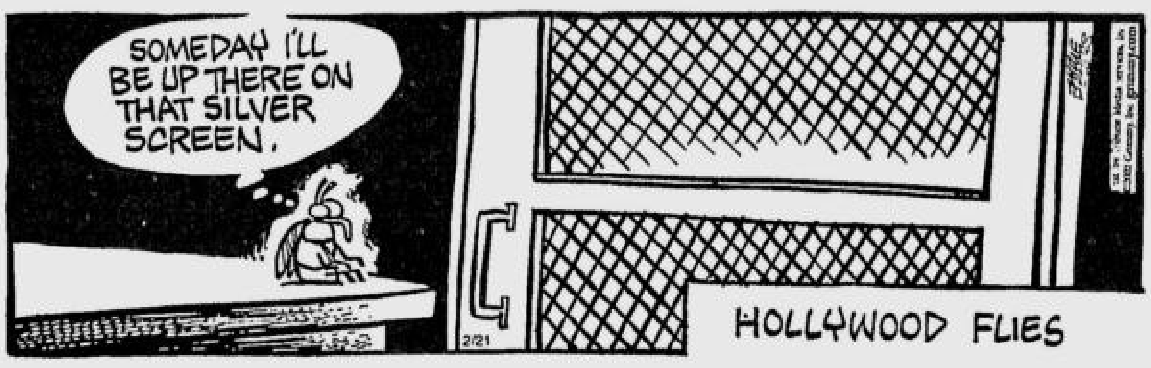
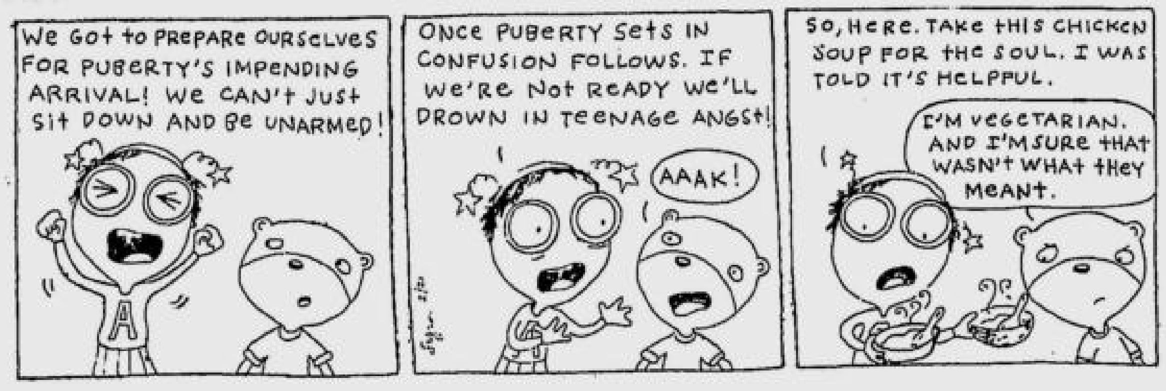
MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM

BY MIKE PETERS


SOMEDAY I'LL BE UP THERE ON THAT SILVER SCREEN.
2/21
HOLLYWOOD FLIES

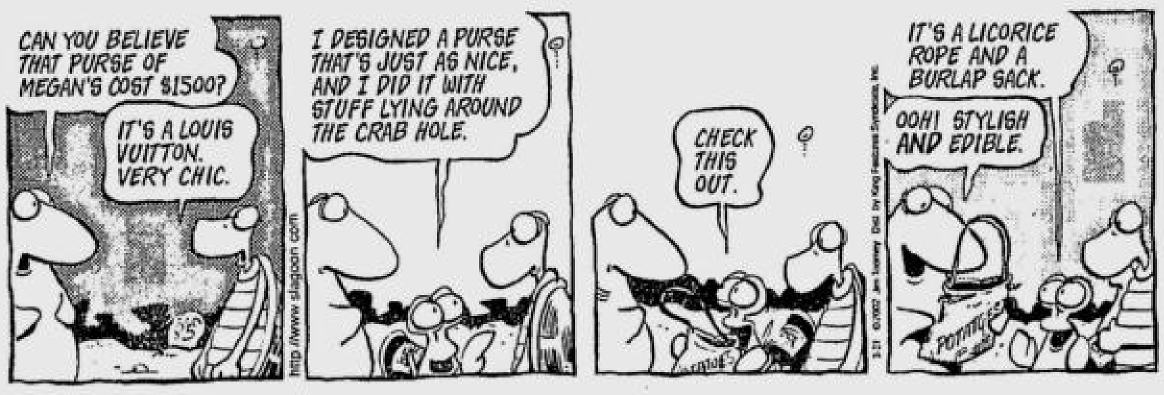
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


We Got to Prepare Ourselves FOR PUBERTY'S IMPENDING ARRIVAL! We CAN'T JUST SIT DOWN AND Be UNARMED!
ONCE PUBERTY SETS IN CONFUSION FOLLOWS. IF We're Not READY We'LL DROWN IN TEENAGE ANGST!
AAAK!
So, Here. TAKE THIS CHICKEN SOUP FOR THE SOUL. I WAS TOLD IT'S HELPFUL.
I'M VEGETARIAN. AND I'M SURE THAT WASN'T WHAT THEY MEANT.

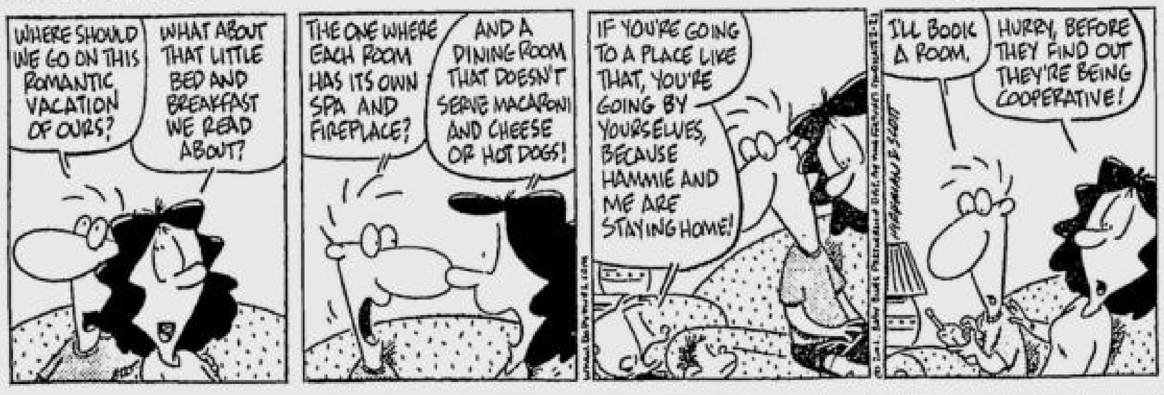
SHERMAN'S LAGOON

BY JIM TOOMEY


CAN YOU BELIEVE THAT PURSE OF MEGAN'S COST $1500?
IT'S A LOUIS VUITTON. VERY CHIC.
http://www.slagoon.com
I DESIGNED A PURSE THAT'S JUST AS NICE, AND I DID IT WITH STUFF LYING AROUND THE CRAB HOLE.
CHECK THIS OUT.
IT'S A LICORICE ROPE AND A BURLAP SACK.
OOH! STYLISH AND EDIBLE.
POTATOES

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


WHERE SHOULD WE GO ON THIS ROMANTIC VACATION OF OURS?
WHAT ABOUT THAT LITTLE BED AND BREAKFAST WE READ ABOUT?
THE ONE WHERE EACH ROOM HAS ITS OWN SPA AND FIREPLACE?
AND A DINING ROOM THAT DOESN'T SERVE MACARONI AND CHEESE OR HOT DOGS!
IF YOU'RE GOING TO A PLACE LIKE THAT, YOU'RE GOING BY YOURSELVES, BECAUSE HAMMIE AND ME ARE STAYING HOME!
I'LL BOOK A ROOM.
HURRY, BEFORE THEY FIND OUT THEY'RE BEING COOPERATIVE!

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Kelsey Grammer, Jennifer Love Hewitt, Alan Trammell

Happy Birthday: You'll be ingenious when it comes to making your money grow this year. You'll have an eye for good investments, and the ability to make your move at precisely the right moment. Your good ideas coupled with your heightened intuition will lead to success. Your numbers are 7, 15, 26, 32, 36, 42

ARIES (March 21-April 19): You'll be in a sociable mood today, possibly even looking for love. Consider getting out to an event that will have some influential people attending.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): You may be feeling some limitations if you have been reluctant to make a decision regarding your future employment. Don't hesitate to take the advice offered by friends.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): You may find yourself up and down emotionally today. Chill out and believe in yourself.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): You may have a lot to deal with today. Be careful not to reveal secret information that could hurt someone you befriended. People you have to work with and for may be less than cooperative today.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): If you get involved in a fund-raising group you will find that you will make a lot of new friends who can offer you support and help in the future.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): You may have to make a few changes in your life in order to hold on to what you've got. Focus on your work and your professional future.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): The more you can learn, the better today. You will be open and receptive to what others have to say and you will make new friends who can contribute to a new lifestyle.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): You may want to lock up your cash. Deal with other people's money and possessions but don't risk the chance of losing what you've worked so hard to obtain.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): You are moving through a make-it or break-it period within a partnership. Be careful not to make a rash decision or statement that will be difficult to reverse.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): You can make a difference if you are diligent about your work. Jump at any chance you get to do things with clients or colleagues.

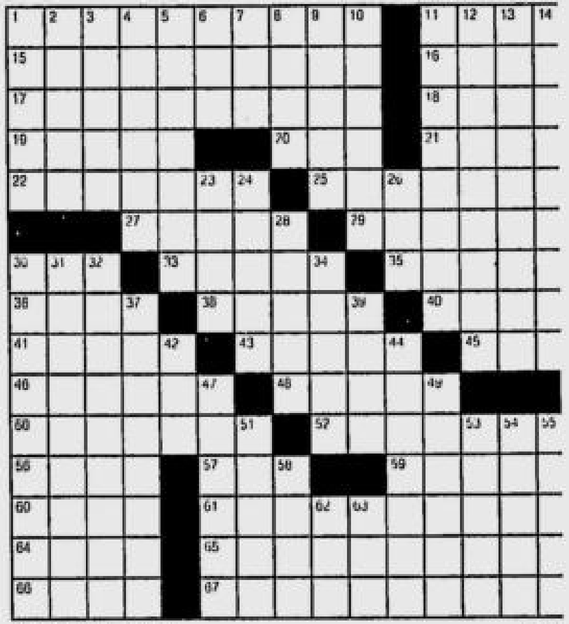
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): You will be in a party mood. Your ability to come up with some great ideas should add to your popularity today. Entertainment should include the whole family or several of your friends.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): You should try to keep busy or at least out of the way today. Idle time will lead to problems at home. You need a change in order to lift your spirits.

Birthday Baby: You are truly family-oriented, taking all your family responsibilities very seriously, no matter how young you are. You are a team player and can put others at ease just by taking charge.

DAILY CROSSWORD

TMSPuzzles@aol.co



By Josiah Breward
Scranton, PA

1/5/0

ACROSS
1 Unlike
11 Domestic worker
15 Reduce to ashes
16 Tolstoy novel, "__ Karenina"
17 Totally unclothed
18 Speak roughly
19 French military caps
20 Auditory organ
21 Swill
22 Detectives
25 Urban underground access
27 Embossed emblems
29 Tail twitcher
30 Held first place
33 Mob melees
35 "Common Sense" author
36 Field of study
38 Disinclined
40 Min. parts
41 Lasso
43 Legal arguments
45 Confirmed
46 Boiling pot
48 Fragrant flower
50 Maria and Maximilian
52 Abstainer
56 Chums
57 Thick mass of hair
59 Hunger for
60 Detachment
61 Faces east
64 Lawn-care implement
65 Anne Tyler novel, "Dinner at the Homesick __"
66 Winter transportation
67 Performances

DOWN
1 Floppies
2 Pentium makers
3 Land's end?
4 Dog Star
5 Juli of the LPGA
6 Guys
7 Pension $
8 Seneca or Huron
9 Mr. T's outfit
10 Pick again
11 Methane
12 Comparisons based on similarities
13 Contumelious behavior
14 Most neatly dressed
23 Frozen fall
24 1966 Beach Boys hit, "__ John B"
26 Short snooze
28 Gain time
30 Delphiniums
31 New York waterway
32 Cadaverous
34 Writer of "Four Saints in Three Acts"
37 Certified
39 Circle of light
42 "__ Saints' Day"
44 Holy place
47 "Get Shorty" author Leonard
49 Arrow poison
51 Philosopher Kierkegaard
53 Beelzebub
54 Significant occurrence
55 Takes a break
58 Tower city
62 & more
63 "The Confessions of __ Turner"

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

B	O	M	B	S	■	A	L	M	A	■	U	P	O	N
A	D	E	L	A	■	T	E	E	S	■	S	A	L	E
H	O	M	O	P	H	O	N	E	S	■	A	C	E	S
T	R	O	N	■	E	L	A	T	E	D	■	K	O	S
■	■	■	D	E	A	L	■	■	M	E	R	E	■	■
J	O	B	B	E	D	■	C	A	B	O	O	D	L	E
A	Z	O	L	E	■	W	E	L	L	■	O	P	A	L
C	A	R	O	■	S	E	N	S	E	■	M	A	N	O
O	W	E	N	■	U	P	T	O	■	R	E	C	A	P
B	A	D	D	E	B	T	S	■	S	O	R	T	I	E
■	■	B	E	D	S	■	■	P	I	E	R	■	■	■
R	I	O	■	S	U	N	L	I	T	■	U	F	O	S
O	V	A	L	■	M	A	S	Q	U	E	M	A	S	K
M	A	R	E	■	E	S	A	U	■	V	O	I	L	E
E	N	D	S	■	S	A	T	E	■	A	R	R	O	W

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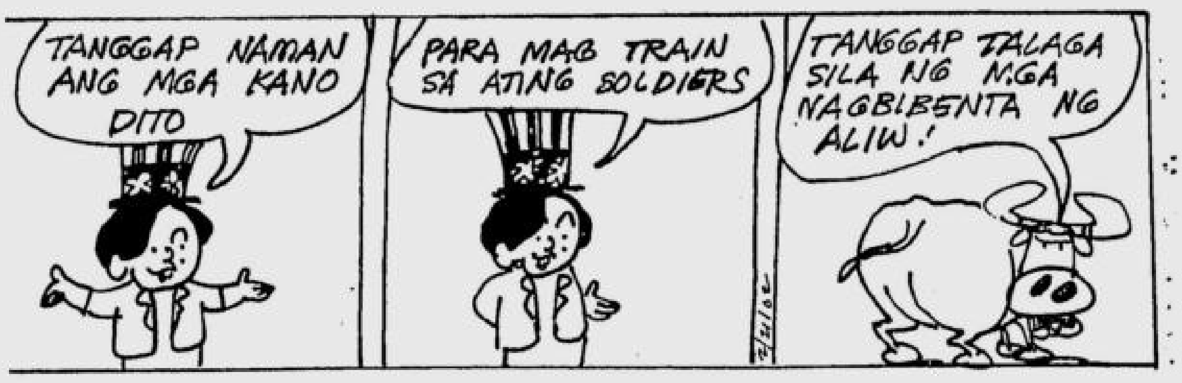
1/5/0

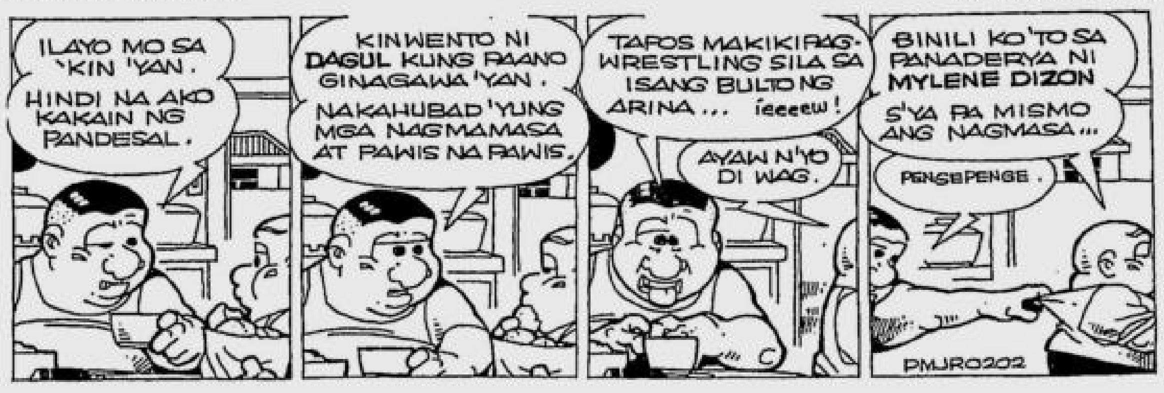
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


TANGGAP NAMAN ANG MGA KANO DITO
PARA MAG TRAIN SA ATING SOLDIERS
2/21/02
TANGGAP TALAGA SILA NG MGA NAGBIBENTA NG ALIW!

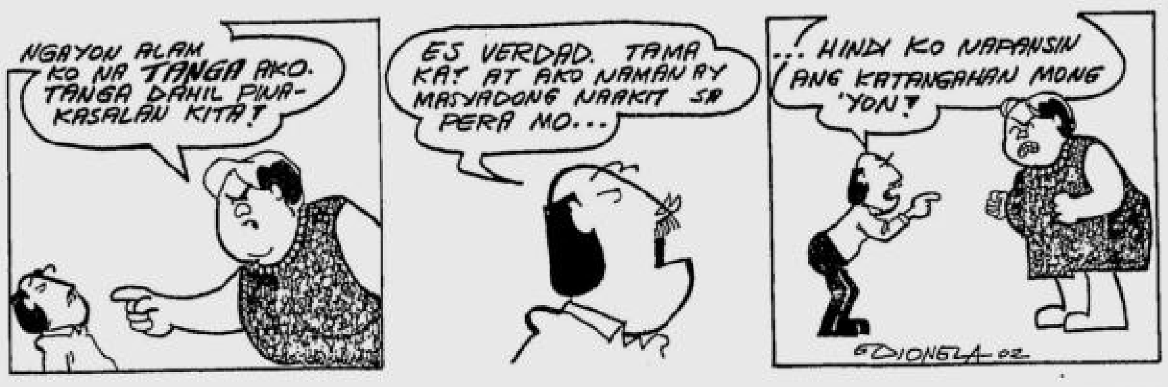
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


ILAYO MO SA 'KIN 'YAN.
HINDI NA AKO KAKAIN NG PANDESAL.
KINWENTO NI DAGUL KUNG PAANO GINAGAWA 'YAN.
NAKAHUBAD 'YUNG MGA NAGMAMASA AT PAWIS NA PAWIS.
TAPOS MAKIKIPAG-WRESTLING SILA SA ISANG BULTO NG ARINA... ieeeew!
AYAW N'YO DI WAG.
BINILI KO 'TO SA PANADERYA NI MYLENE DIZON
S'YA PA MISMO ANG NAGMASA...
PENGE PENGE.
PMJR0202

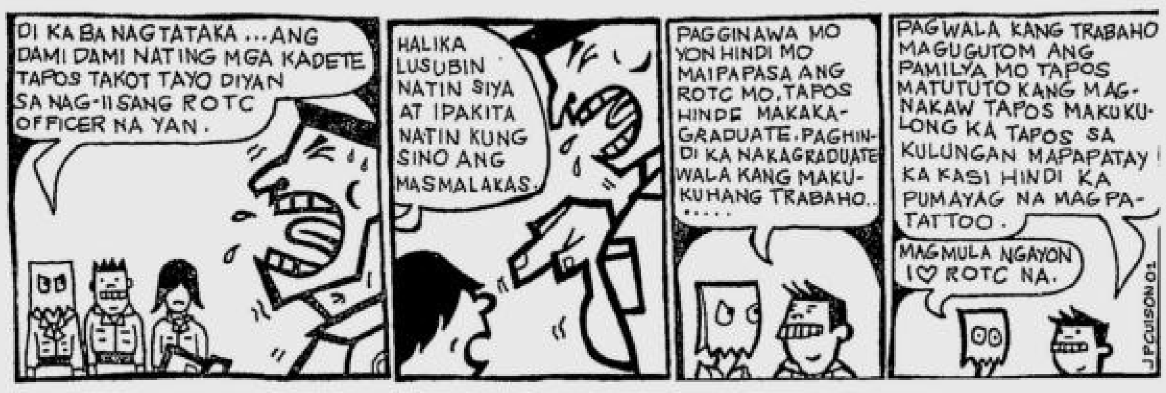
SIMO

BY EDGAR DIONELA


NGAYON ALAM KO NA TANGA AKO. TANGA DAHIL PINA-KASALAN KITA!
ES VERDAD. TAMA KA! AT AKO NAMAN AY MASYADONG NAAKIT SA PERA MO...
... HINDI KO NAPANSIN ANG KATANGAHAN MONG 'YON!
EDIONELA 02

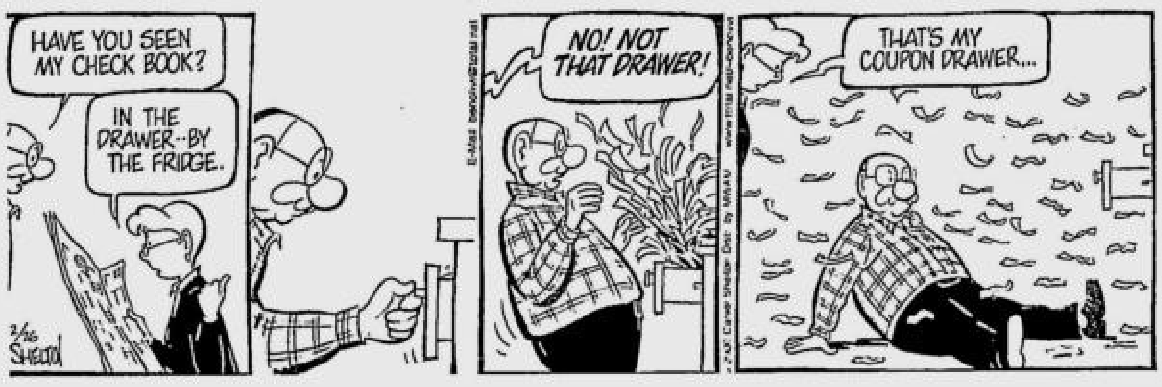
GARAPATA BLOOD

BY JOHN PAUL CUISON


DI KA BA NAGTATAKA ...ANG DAMI DAMI NATING MGA KADETE TAPOS TAKOT TAYO DIYAN SA NAG-IISANG ROTC OFFICER NA YAN.
HALIKA LUSUBIN NATIN SIYA AT IPAKITA NATIN KUNG SINO ANG MASMALAKAS.
PAGGINAWA MO YON HINDI MO MAIPAPASA ANG ROTC MO, TAPOS HINDE MAKAKA-GRADUATE. PAGHINDI KA NAKAGRADUATE WALA KANG MAKUKUHANG TRABAHO.....
PAG WALA KANG TRABAHO MAGUGUTOM ANG PAMILYA MO TAPOS MATUTUTO KANG MAGNAKAW TAPOS MAKUKULONG KA TAPOS SA KULUNGAN MAPAPATAY KA KASI HINDI KA PUMAYAG NA MAGPA-TATTOO.
MAGMULA NGAYON I ♡ ROTC NA.
J.P. CUISON 02

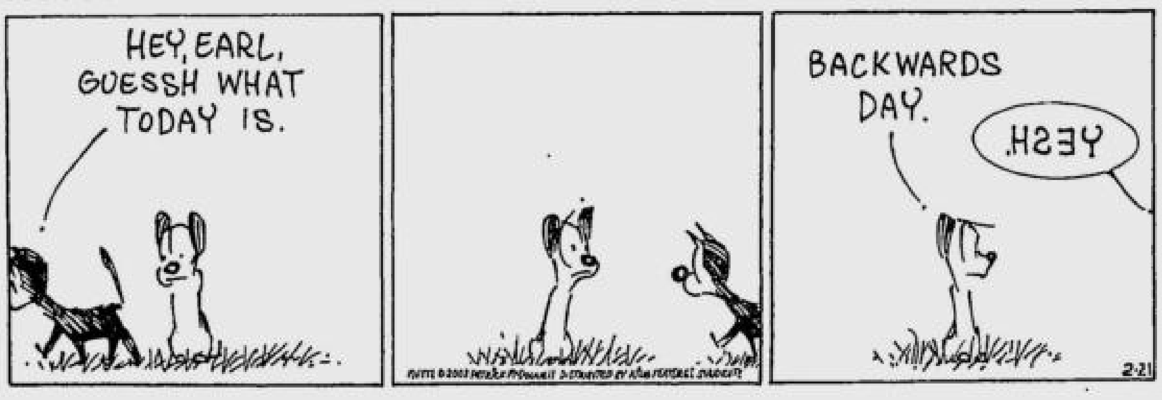
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


HAVE YOU SEEN MY CHECK BOOK?
IN THE DRAWER--BY THE FRIDGE.
2/26 SHELTON
NO! NOT THAT DRAWER!
THAT'S MY COUPON DRAWER...

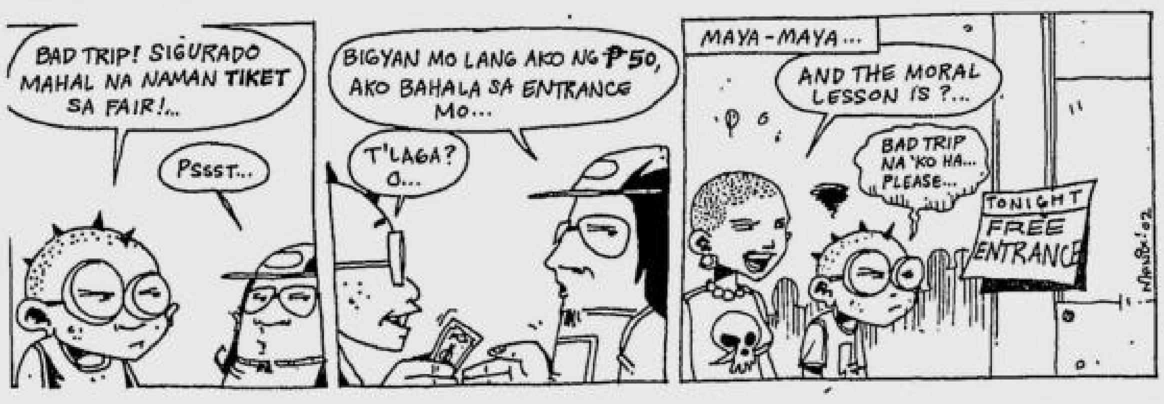
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


HEY, EARL, GUESSH WHAT TODAY IS.
BACKWARDS DAY.
HSEY
2-21

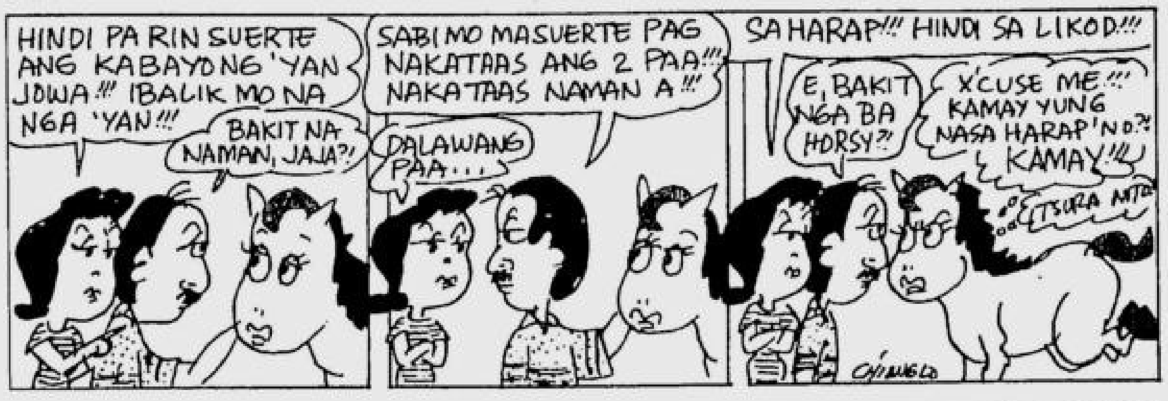
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


BAD TRIP! SIGURADO MAHAL NA NAMAN TIKET SA FAIR!...
PSSST...
BIGYAN MO LANG AKO NG ₱50, AKO BAHALA SA ENTRANCE MO...
T'LAGA? O...
MAYA-MAYA...
AND THE MORAL LESSON IS ?...
BAD TRIP NA 'KO HA... PLEASE...
TONIGHT FREE ENTRANCE
MANIX 02

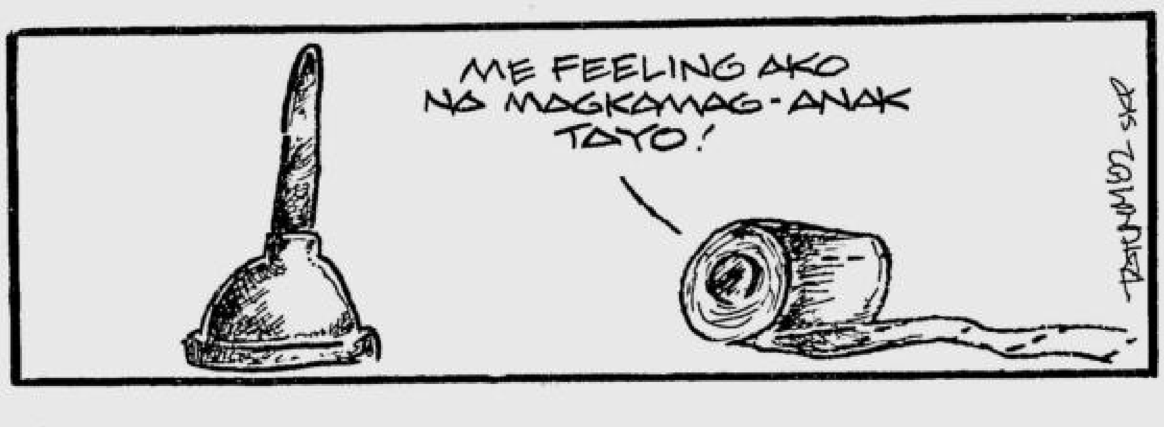
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


HINDI PA RIN SUERTE ANG KABAYONG 'YAN JOWA!!! IBALIK MO NA NGA 'YAN!!!
BAKIT NA NAMAN, JAJA?!
SABI MO MASUERTE PAG NAKATAAS ANG 2 PAA!!! NAKATAAS NAMAN A!!!
DALAWANG PAA...
SA HARAP!!! HINDI SA LIKOD!!!
E, BAKIT NGA BA HORSY?!
X'CUSE ME!!! KAMAY YUNG NASA HARAP'NO?! KAMAY!!!
ITSURA MO
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


ME FEELING AKO NA MAGKAMAG-ANAK TAYO!

SM CINEMA

SM Dial-A-Movie Tel. 633-9999

NOW SHOWING

SM CITY BACOOR
4173889

1 ISANG PANAGINIP
2 RAT RACE
3 COLLATERAL DAMAGE
4 MOTHMAN PROPHECIES
5 SHALLOW HAL
6 IKAW LAMANG . . .
7 HINOG SA PILIT
8 KATE & LEOPOLD

SM CENTERPOINT
7149522 -7161416

1 IKAW LAMANG . . .
2 KATE & LEOPOLD
3 MOTHMAN PROPHECIES
4 VANILLA SKY
5 COLLATERAL DAMAGE
6 HINOG SA PILIT
7 RAT RACE
8 BLACK HAWK DOWN
9 SHALLOW HAL
10 ISANG PANAGINIP

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
9350749

1 ISANG PANAGINIP
2 BLACK HAWK DOWN
3 RAT RACE
4 COLLATERAL DAMAGE
5 MOTHMAN PROPHECIES
6 IKAW LAMANG . . .
7 COLLATERAL DAMAGE
8 SHALLOW HAL
9 IKAW LAMANG . . .
10 RIDING IN CARS
11 KATE & LEOPOLD
12 HINOG SA PILIT

SM CITY MANILA
5239240

1 SHALLOW HAL
2 MOTHMAN PROPHECIES
3 KATE & LEOPOLD
4 COLLATERAL DAMAGE
5 FROM HELL
6 COLLATERAL DAMAGE
7 THE OTHERS
8 RAT RACE
9 IKAW LAMANG . . .
10 IKAW LAMANG . . .
11 HINOG SA PILIT
12 VANILLA SKY

SM MEGAMALL
6331901 • 6329401

1 COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2 KATE & LEOPOLD
3 MOTHMAN PROPHECIES
4 COLLATERAL DAMAGE
5 RAT RACE
6 BLACK HAWK DOWN
7 HINOG SA PILIT
8 OCEAN'S ELEVEN
9 IKAW LAMANG . . .
10 SHALLOW HAL
11 VANILLA SKY
12 RIDING IN CARS

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
9295452

1 KATE & LEOPOLD
2 VANILLA SKY
3 HINOG SA PILIT
4 IKAW LAMANG . . .
5 RAT RACE
6 MOTHMAN PROPHECIES
7 SHALLOW HAL
8 COLLATERAL DAMAGE
9 CLOSED
10 CLOSED
11 CLOSED
12 CLOSED

SM SOUTHMALL
8086782

1 RAT RACE
2 VANILLA SKY
3 COLLATERAL DAMAGE
4 SHALLOW HAL
5 BLACK HAWK DOWN
6 KATE & LEOPOLD
7 IKAW LAMANG . . .
8 MOTHMAN PROPHECIES
9 ISANG PANAGINIP
10 HINOG SA PILIT

SM CITY CEBU
2313876

1 SPECIAL EVENTS
2 THE OTHERS
3 VANILLA SKY
4 HEARTS IN ATLANTIS
5 HUSTLER
6 KAULAYAW
7 IKAW LAMANG . . .
8 COLLATERAL DAMAGE

SM CITY ILOILO
3209422

1 GLASS HOUSE
2 CLOSED
3 COLLATERAL DAMAGE
4 IKAW LAMANG
5 KATE & LEOPOLD
6 PELIKULA AT LIPUNAN
7 VANILLA SKY
8 HEARTS IN ATLANTIS

SM CITY PAMPANGA
7128015

1 COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2 KATE & LEOPOLD
3 MARSHALL DICK
4 KAULAYAW
5 RIDING IN CARS
6 IKAW LAMANG . . .

SM SUPER CTR. SUCAT
8294975

1 IKAW LAMANG . . .
2 SHALLOW HAL
3 COLLATERAL DAMAGE
4 MOTHMAN PROPHECIES

SM CINEMA GUADALUPE
8820984

1 HINOG SA PILIT
2 COLLATERAL DAMAGE
3 RAT RACE

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN
2514302

1 COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2 MOTHMAN PROPHECIES
3 SHALLOW HAL
4 IKAW LAMANG . . .

SM CITY DAVAO
2976998

1 COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2 IKAW LAMANG . . .
3 CORKY ROMANO
4 DOMESTIC DISTURBANCE
5 VANILLA SKY
6 THE OTHERS

SM BICUTAN

1
2
3
4

SOON TO OPEN!
4 NEW
STATE-OF-THE-ART
VISION & SOUND

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO

1
2
3
4

SOON TO OPEN!
4 NEW
STATE-OF-THE-ART
VISION & SOUND

THE PODIUM
18 ADB Avenue Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City

1
2

SOON TO OPEN!
2 NEW STATE-OF-THE-ART VISION & SOUND

6389781-85

Movies are subject to change without prior notice

Celebrate

the Chinese Film Festival

ArtFilm, Greenbelt, Feb. 13 to 26

NOW SHOWING

THE BRIDE W/ WHITE HAIR

A CLASSIC TALE OF SWORDS & SORCERY OF HONOR & OF LOVE

(Feb. 20 to 22)

Starring:
Brigitte Lin Ching Hsia
& Leslie Cheung (*star of Farewell My Concubine*)
Directed by: Ronny Yu

MULTI-WINNER!
Golden Horse 1993 - Best Adapted Script
Golden Horse 1993 - Best Song
Hong Kong Film Awards 1993 - Best Photography
Hong Kong Film Awards 1993 - Best Art Direction
Hong Kong Film Awards 1993 - Best Costume Design
Gerardmer Fantastica 1994 - Grand Prix

MTRCB Rating: Restricted 18

AYALA CINEMAS

Art Film

NEXT ATTRACTION

CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON

MMTA
METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

MOVIE GUIDE

NOW SHOWING

EMAIL: mmta@asia.com

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 (DDS) MOTHMAN PROPHECIES
2 (SDDS) COLLATERAL DAMAGE
3 (DTS) SHALLOW HAL
4 GOLD (DTS) COLLATERAL DAMAGE
5 GOLD (DOLBY) MOTHMAN PROPHECIES
6 GOLD (SDDS) RAT RACE
7 GOLD (DOLBY) SHALLOW HAL
8 KATE & LEOPOLD
9 IKAW LAMANG .
10 VANILLA SKY

Pearl Plaza Cinemas
(Parañaque) tel. 853.4486

1 HALIK SA AKING LUPA
2
3 (DTS) COLLATERAL DAMAGE
4
5
6 (DTS)
Golden Pearl THX

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3274

1 IKAW LAMANG .
2 COLLATERAL DAMAGE
3 HINOG SA PILIT

starmall Movies
(Shaw Blvd.) tel 724.4986

1 IKAW LAMANG . .
2 SHALLOW HAL
3 MOTHMAN PROPHECIES
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL) COLLATERAL DAMAGE
5 HINOG SA PILIT

METROPOLIS star
tel 850.4285

1 SHALLOW HAL
2 HINOG SA PILIT
3 IKAW LAMANG . .
4 COLLATERAL DAMAGE
5 MOTHMAN PROPHECIES
6 RAT RACE
7 RESERVE
8 RESERVE

PREMIERE CINEMA THX
(Makati City) tel 751.2011 to13

1 SHALLOW HAL

Center Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1 MAY PAG IBIG PA KAYA
2 VANILLA SKY

FCM FAIRVIEW CENTER MALL, INC.
tel 930.9515

1
2 HAPLOS NG PAGMAMAHAL
3 COLLATERAL DAMAGE

Spring
(Libertad, Pasay City) tel 831.7864

1
A COLLATERAL DAMAGE

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376

1 COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2 IKAW LAMANG
3 HALIK SA AKING LUPA
4

GOTESCO CINEMA

Gotesco City
(Manila) tel 734.8588

1 (DOLBY) COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2
3
4 HINOG SA PILIT
5 COLLATERAL DAMAGE
6 IKAW LAMANG . . .
7 (DTS) SHALLOW HAL
8 (SDDS) RAT RACE
9 (DOLBY) MOTHMAN PROPHECIES

Gotesco Caloocan
tel 362.3508

2 HINOG SA PILIT

Gotesco Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 364.3781

1 IKAW LAMANG . . .
2 IKAW LAMANG . . .
3 ISANG PANAGINIP
4 (SDDS) RAT RACE
5 HINOG SA PILIT
6 (DOLBY) COLLATERAL DAMAGE
7 (DTS) SHALLOW HAL
8 KAULAYAW
9 HALIK SA AKING LUPA

Gotesco Commonwealth
tel 951.0083

1 (DTS) SHALLOW HAL
2 IKAW LAMANG . . .
3 HINOG SA PILIT
4 RESERVE
5 (SDDS) MOTHMAN PROPHECIES
6 RAT RACE
7 (DOLBY) COLLATERAL DAMAGE
8 RESERVE

Gotesco Ortigas
tel 656.6795

1 IKAW LAMANG . . .
2 HINOG SA PILIT
3 (DTS) COLLATERAL DAMAGE
4 RAT RACE
5 (SDDS) SHALLOW HAL

Universal
(Manila) tel 733.2470

1 HINOG SA PILIT

Sampaguita
(Cubao) tel 911.7888

1 HINOG SA PILIT

Dilson
(Manila) tel 734.7724

Dilson HINOG SA PILIT
Lords HINOG SA PILIT
Jennet

MARKETPLACE Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1 IKAW LAMANG . .
2 COLLATERAL DAMAGE
3 SHALLOW HAL

Prima
(Pasig) tel 641.1215

3 HINOG SA PILIT

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto SUPER CINERAMA
tel 733.4238

1 (DOLBY) COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2 IKAW LAMANG . . .
3 RESERVE
4 HINOG SA PILIT
5 SHALLOW HAL

New Divisoria Mall DIVISORIA CINEMA
tel 244.4619

1 IKAW LAMANG . . .
2 HINOG SA PILIT
3 HALIK SA AKING LUPA
4 RESERVE
5 RESERVE
6 RESERVE

FRC Cinema
Talaba Bacoor Cavite

1 COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2 HALIK SA AKING LUPA

Berma
tel 879.2029

1 COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2 IKAW LAMANG . .

CitiMall
(Parañaque) tel 820.7269

1 IKAW LAMANG . . .
2 SHALLOW HAL

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa Laguna)
tel (049) 534.2185 / 534.2198

1 IKAW LAMANG . . .
2 SHALLOW HAL
3 (DTS) COLLATERAL DAMAGE

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1 RIDING IN CARS
2 (DTS) IKAW LAMANG . . .
3 (DOLBY) COLLATERAL DAMAGE
4 SHALLOW HAL

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146

1 RIDING IN CARS
2 (DOLBY) SHALLOW HAL
3 (DTS) COLLATERAL DAMAGE
4 IKAW LAMANG . . .

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1 COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2 IKAW LAMANG
3 SOON TO OPEN
4 SOON TO OPEN

Cinema 2000 MetroTown
(Tarlac) tel(045) 982.1729

1 IKAW LAMANG . . .
2 HEART IN ATLANTIC
3 (DOLBY) KATE & LEOPOLD
4 (DTS)

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS) COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2 GIRLS FEVER
3
4 (DTS) IKAW LAMANG . . .

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY) COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2 IKAW LAMANG . . .
3 (DTS) MARSHALL DICK
4 HALIK SA AKING LUPA
5 SHALLOW HAL

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1 IKAW LAMANG . . .
2 COLLATERAL DAMAGE
3 SHALLOW HAL

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249-2558

1 IKAW LAMANG . . .
2 COLLATERAL DAMAGE
3 SHALLOW HAL

Olivarez Tagaytay
tel (046) 413.0311

1 COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2 IKAW LAMANG . . .
3 KAULAYAW

Morales Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.9736

1
2
3

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel (049) 531.4808

1 (DTS) IKAW LAMANG . . .
2 (DTS) HALIK SA AKING LUPA

Fourstep
(Cavite) tel (046) 416.2385

1

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1 HALIK SA AKING LUPA
2 OCEAN'S ELEVEN
3 IKAW LAMANG

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1 COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2 HEART IN ATLANTIC
3 VANILLA SKY
4 IKAW LAMANG . . .

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 (DOLBY EX) KATE & LEOPOLD
2 IKAW LAMANG . . .
3 (DTS) COLLATERAL DAMAGE
4 THE OTHERS

***Movies are subject to change without prior notice**

ADVANCED SCREENING THX DOLBY dts SDDS

GMG INTERNATIONAL

PREMIERE CINEMA THX

NOW SHOWING

Shallow Hal

MOVIEWORLD CINEMAS

NOW SHOWING

galleria 632-9115-16 633-7641 loc. 279

1 THX COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2 COLLATERAL DAMAGE
3 SHALLOW HAL
4 RAT RACE
5 MOTHMAN PROPHECIES
6 RIDING IN CARS
7 VANILLA SKY
8 IKAW LAMANG . . .
9 KATE & LEOPOLD
10 BLACK HAWK DOWN

ermita 536 -7809- 12

1 COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2 RAT RACE
3 IKAW LAMANG . . .
4 RIDING IN CARS
5 KATE & LEOPOLD
6 MOTHMAN PROPHECIES
7 SHALLOW HAL

metro east - marcos hway 682- 8193 / 8280

1 KATE & LEOPOLD
2 SHALLOW HAL
3 IKAW LAMANG. . .
4 RAT RACE
5 MOTHMAN PROPHECIES
6 HINOG SA PILIT
7 COLLATERAL DAMAGE
8 VANILLA SKY

novaliches 935- 3229 - 30

1 COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2 VANILLA SKY
3 BLACK HAWK DOWN
4 OCEAN'S ELEVEN
5 SHALLOW HAL
6 IKAW LAMANG . . .
7 RAT RACE
8 KATE & LEOPOLD

imus 471- 8188 / 875- 3838

1 COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2 MOTHMAN PROPHECIES
3 HINOG SA PILIT
4 SHALLOW HAL
5 IKAW LAMANG . . .
6 RAT RACE

bacolod 441- 0453 / 0459

1 VANILLA SKY
2 LORD OF THE RINGS
3 COLLATERAL DAMAGE
4 GLASS HOUSE
5 MAY PAG IBIG PA KAYA
6 DOMESTIC DISTURBANCE

iloilo 336- 8077 - 78

1 COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2 HEART IN ATLANTIS
3 IKAW LAMANG . . . .
4 GLASS HOUSE
5 KATE & LEOPOLD
6 LORD OF THE RINGS

star mills- Sn. Fernando, Pamp. 875- 1304

1 OPENS February 27, 2002
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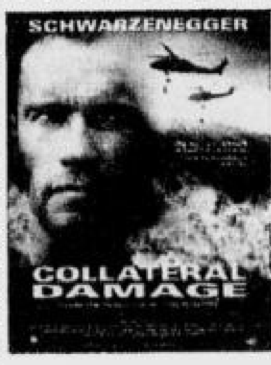

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More stars caught in cycle of love and pain

DOLLYWOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

IT'S so heartwarming to see another "naughty" girl, **Maegan Aguilar**, get into Bible study.

Maegan and I belong to the same Born-Again Christian church. We both have kissed our wild days goodbye although that does not exactly mean that we have forgotten how to have good clean fun.

Maegan did a piercing rendition of her dad's all-time hit "Anak" during communion and everyone was visibly moved. I cornered her: "So what happened to your German fianceé?" She shrugged her shoulders. "The wedding didn't take place. I don't want to get into another relationship yet. I've had enough!"

You go, girl! It's about time we let God lead the way from now on.

Speaking of girls who are tired of love's maze and mess, Jackie Forster and Samantha Lopez echo the same sentiments as Maegan and I. Sam sighed, "What I'm looking for now is husband material. I don't like to have a boyfriend just for the heck of having one. I've been burned many times."

Jackie agreed: "I had to call it quits with my black American boyfriend. Although I really loved him, it just got too draining. Graduate *na ako sa* fling-fling."

Oh well. We just have to embrace all of love's mysteries and miseries. How's that for a Valentine afterthought?

For feedback, e-mail friends_at_dsquare @yahoo.com or wateringhole2000@yahoo.com

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

ARANETA CENTER THEATERS 911-3101	
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-1	IKAW LAMANG . . .
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-2	HINOG SA PILIT
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-3 (DDS)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-4 (SDDS)	SHALLOW HAL
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-5 (DTS)	MOTHMAN PROPHECIES
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-6 (DOLBY)	VANILLA SKY
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-7 (DOLBY)	RAT RACE
FARMERS PLAZA-1 (DOLBY)	IKAW LAMANG . . .
FARMERS PLAZA-2 (DOLBY)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
FIESTA CARNIVAL	
NEW FRONTIER	
MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	MASAKIT HUWAG IPILIT / SOURCE OF THE NIGHT
ODEON	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
ODEON-2	HALIK SA AKING LUPA
ROBEN	HINOG SA PILIT
TANDEM-1	SEX MEDUSA
TANDEM-2	SEX EDUCATION
TIMES	JOY RIDE / KING OF GLADIATORS
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	CLOSED
ACT-4	CLOSED
CORONET-2	ORIGINAL SIN
QUEZON-1	HINOG SA PILIT
REMAR	HINOG SA PILIT
REMAR-2	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	IKAW LAMANG HANGGANG NGAYON
B	HINOG SA PILIT
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
CINEMA-2	SHALLOW HAL
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	REBULOSYONARYO
CINEMA-2	HALIK SA AKING LUPA
CINEMA-3	MARSHALL DICK
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	FROM HELL
CINEMA-6	KATE & LEOPOLD
CINEMA-7	IKAW LANG HANGGANG NGAYON
CINEMA-8	KUNG IKAW AY ISANG PANAGINIP
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	RIDING CARS w/ BOYS
CINEMA-12	VANILLA SKY
CINEMA-14	IKAW LANG HANGGANG NGAYON
CINEMA-15	IKAW LANG HANGGANG NGAYON
LORES	
CINEMA-2	CLOSED
CINEMA-3	CLOSED
POWER PLANT CINEMA	
CINEMA-1	RAT RACE
CINEMA-2	KATE & LEOPOLD
CINEMA-3	SHALLOW HAL
CINEMA-4	MOTHMAN PROPHECIES
CINEMA-5	RIDING IN CARS W/ BOYS
CINEMA-6	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
UNIWIDE METROMALL	
(LAS PIÑAS)	
CINEMA-1	
CINEMA-2	
CINEMA-4	
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARAÑAQUE)	
CINEMA-1	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
CINEMA-2	THE OTHER SIDE OF LOVE
CINEMA-4	ALAMID

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RAT RACE - GP 12:10, 2:35, 5:00, 7:25, 9:50	KATE & LEOPOLD - GP 11:50, 2:20, 4:50, 7:20, 9:50	SHALLOW HAL - P 13 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00
MOTHMAN PROPHECIES - P 13 11:40, 2:10, 4:40, 7:10, 9:40	RIDING IN CARS w/ BOYS - P 13 1:20, 4:00, 6:40, 9:30	COLLATERAL DAMAGE - R 18 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 9:50

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February 21	SHOWING TODAY!
9pm	Ilonggo Short Films
11am	Nick Deocampo's MOTHER IGNACIA
1pm	ILONGGO SHORT FILMS!
3pm	Restored Classic! Dolphy in JACK & JILL
5pm	Guisseppe Tornatore's MALENA
7pm	Nida Blanca Tribute! JOHN AND MARSHA

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February 22, 2002
Zhang Yimou's
THE ROAD HOME
at 9am
Behn Cervantes'
SAKADA
at 11am
Mike De Leon's
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at 1pm
Guisseppe Tornatore's
MALENA
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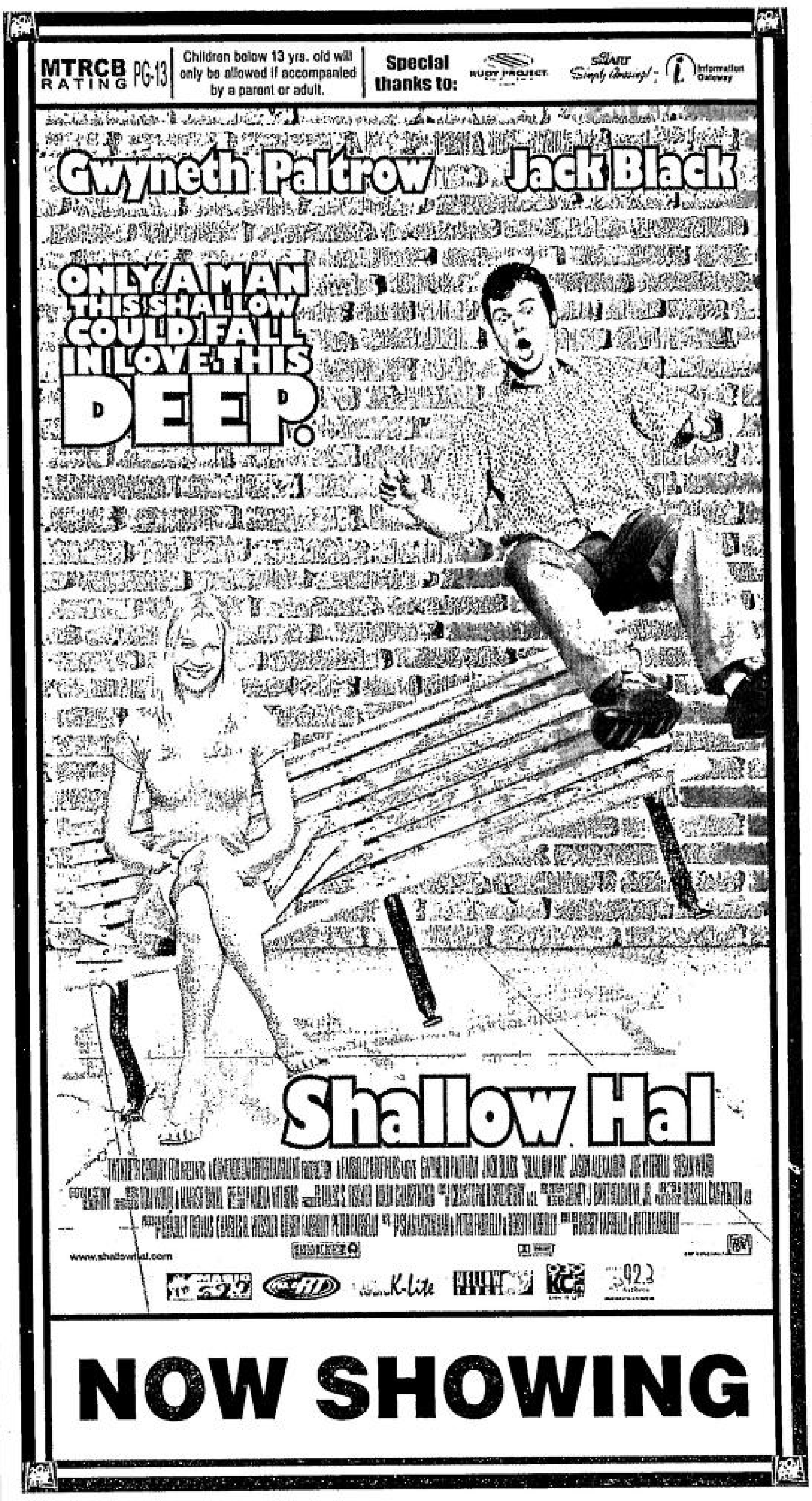

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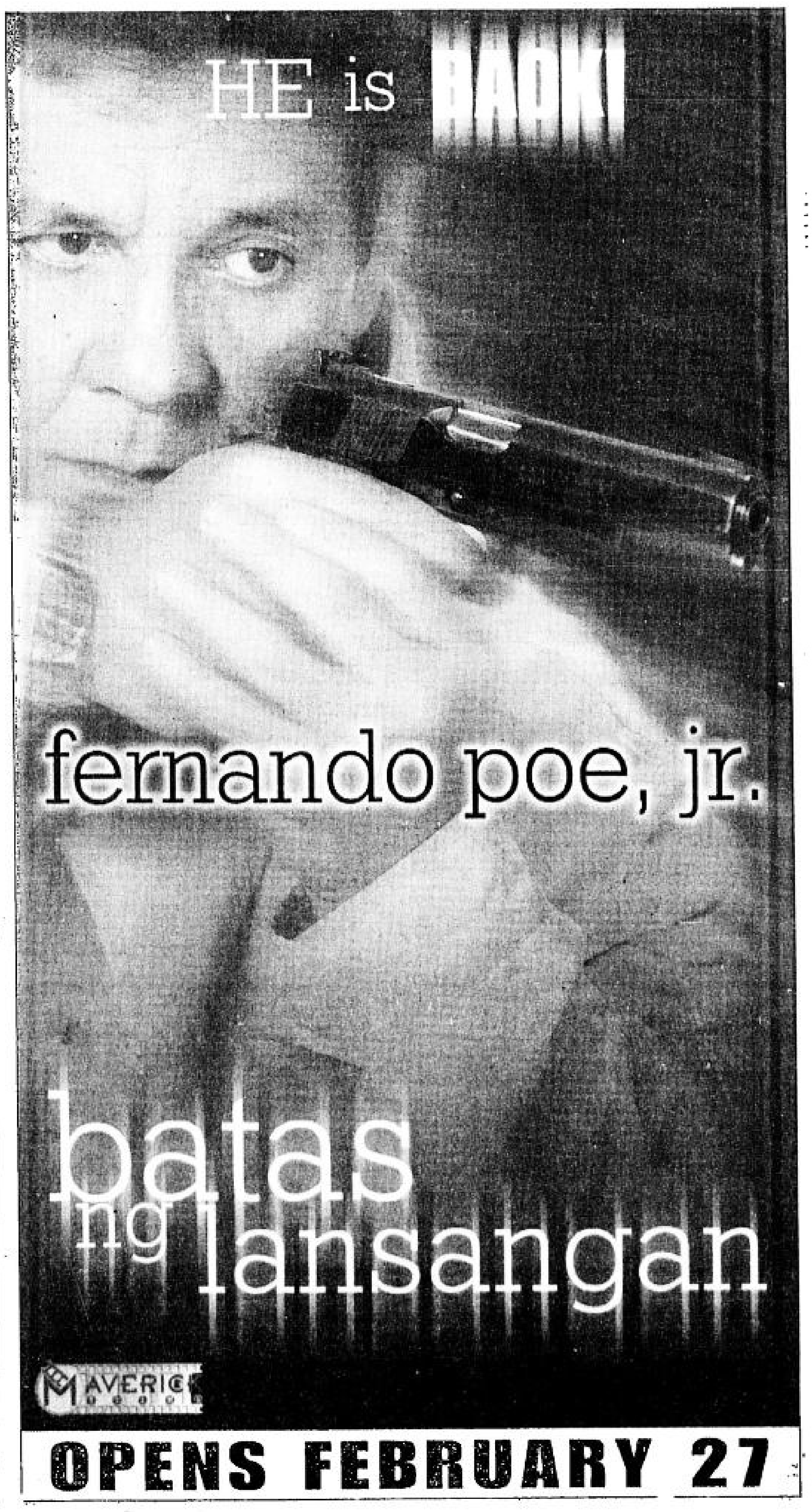

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OPENS FEBRUARY 27

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor **Louie C. Camino**

Directors' guild supports tax rebate bill, plans filmfests

By Leah Salterio

THE DIRECTORS' Guild of the Philippines (DGPI) will sponsor, together with the Cultural Center of the Philippines, the Asean film conference in 2003 and an international film festival in Manila in 2004.

These were among the plans the DGPI revealed in a press conference last Tuesday at Whistle Stop in Tomas Morato, Quezon City, during which it also announced its new officers.

New DGPI president Carlitos Siguion-Reyna said the directors' group would push for the approval of the Senate proposal granting tax rebates to quality movies.

New DGPI chair Joel Lamangan said the guild would work for the first time with the CCP in projects that would benefit the local film industry.

"We are fortunate that (CCP artistic director) Nanding Josef is a supporter of the film industry," Lamangan said. "We want to have a close coordination between the film industry and the CCP."

Of the DGPI's plan to hold the Asean film conference next year, Lamangan said: "We want Asean directors to become a force in filmfests in other parts of the world."

The DGPI will also participate in the outreach and cultural exchange programs of the CCP.

The DGPI and the CCP will also confer the "Gawad Direk" annual award to honor outstanding directors and their works.

Aside from working with the CCP, the DGPI will also try to complement the programs of the National Commission on Culture and the Arts (NCCA), according to Lamangan.

Aside from Lamangan and Siguion-Reyna, the other new DGPI officers are vice president Emmanuel Borlaza, treasurer Mel Chionglo and secretary Joey Romero.

Board members are Jeffrey Jeturian, Romy Suzara, Joey Reyes, Uro de la Cruz, Lav Diaz and Eric Matti.

According to Siguion-Reyna, the Senate bill proposes that films rated "A" by the Cinema Evaluation Committee will get a 100 percent tax rebate, while those rated "B" will get a 50 percent tax rebate.

"The bill will serve as incentive to scriptwriters, directors and producers," Siguion-Reyna said. "It will also stimulate the creation of quality films, those that go beyond the formula mode. Filmmakers will be more experimental and provocative."

The DGPI will also work toward nation-building through cinema "as a way of uplifting our dignity and nobility," Siguion-Reyna said.

Another DGPI goal this year is to make the younger generation appreciate local movies more by creating links with private and public schools.

"We will try to redefine the attitude of the younger set toward local films," Reyes said. "They've been very unfairly comparing local movies with Hollywood. They find local movies *baduy*.

"I have a film, 'Bukas na Lang Kita Mamahalin' with Angelu de Leon and Diether Ocampo, but I've heard it said that people have to cover their face with a handkerchief when lining up to watch it at Glorietta 4."

Chionglo gave an update on the films of DGPI members that will participate in foreign film festivals. Diaz's "Batang Westside" will be sent to Brussels, Singapore, Hong Kong, Pattaya (Thailand) and Karlovy Vary in Czech Republic.

Lamangan's "Deathrow" will compete in Deauville, France, on March 7. Siguion-Reyna's "Azucena" will compete in the Paris Film Festival in April.

Gil Portes' "Gatas" and "Markova" will compete at the Newport Beach Filmfest. "Markova" will also be screened at the London Gay and Lesbian Filmfest.

Fools' gold

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

IF OSCAR gold goes to the most outstanding practitioners of the cinematic arts, what do their complete opposites, the worst filmmakers in the world, get? The Razzies, that's what—annual movie "awards" for utter mediocrity or incompetence that are announced one day before the Academy Awards (this year, on March 23).

Who will "win" these trophies made out of fools' gold? Well, perceived fools in the movie trade! This year, they include worst actors **John Travolta** ("Domestic Disturbance"), **Tom Greene** (Freddy Got Fingered"), **Ben Affleck** ("Pearl Harbor"), **Keanu Reeves** ("Sweet November") and **Kevin Costner** ("3,000 Miles to Graceland").

"Worst actresses"? **Charlize Theron** ("Sweet November"), **Penelope Cruz** ("Captain Corelli's Mandolin"), **Angelina Jolie** ("Lara Croft, Tomb Raider"), **Mariah Carey** ("Glitter"), and **Jennifer Lopez** ("Angel Eyes").

"Worst films": "3,000 Miles to Graceland," "Glitter," "Pearl Harbor" and "Freddy Got Fingered."

What's the point to "honoring" terrible work in cinema? Aside from bitchy catharsis, the Razzies serve a warning that future acts of cinematic cruddiness won't be condoned, so film people should get their act together and do professional work, for fear of ending up among next year's "awardees."

What about the local film scene? Will some film buffs also form a group to survey this year's Pinoy flicks and "honor" the worst of them with fools-gold trophies in 2003? Any self-righteous and bitchy volunteers? The line forms to the right.

'Illusione'

AFTER months of rehearsals, the stylish impersonation show, "Illusione," opens at Onstage Greenbelt on Feb. 22, with other performances on Feb. 23 and March 1, 2, 7, 8 9, 14, 15 and 16, all at 8 p.m. Call Ticketworld at 891-5610.

Fabulous production numbers feature top impersonators, with special cameo appearances by **James Cooper** and **Ernest Santiago**.

It will be recalled that James was a professional female impersonator in the States before he returned to the Philippines to put up his chain of hair and beauty salons, and on doing special make-up for some TV-film stars.

V-day event

ON SATURDAY, Feb. 23, the New Voice Company presents a special benefit performance of **Eve Ensler**'s "The Vagina Monologues" at the Folk Arts Theater, with a host of female celebrities and achievers in various fields performing.

TRAVOLTA

The V-day event will be graced by playwright Ensler herself, who will fly in from New York. V-day is a global movement to end violence against women. The show's beneficiaries include Gabriela's Purple Rose campaign, women's Crisis Center, KALAKASAN (Kababaihan Laban sa Karahasan") and WomenLEAD. Call 891-5610.

Last episode

AT 8:30 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 25, ABC-5 telecasts the last episode of "Touched By An Angel." The concluding teleplay, "Amazing Grace: The Promised Land Crossover," is about the mission of four angels in the lives of the members of the Greene family.

Feedback

FROM **Edith R. Tamano** of Cebu City: "I notice that more celebrities are now being invited to join game shows on TV, probably to boost those shows' ratings. It's nice to see the celebrities doing well as contestants and making money for their favorite charities.

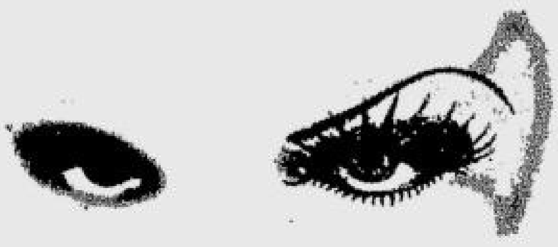
"But it's obvious that the questions for the celebrity contestants are easier than those for the non-celebrities who join the shows. It must be the shows' way of making sure that the celebrities don't get embarrassed if they fail to answer tough questions. But, is this fair? The questions should be the same for everybody."

Dance Forum

AT 6 p.m. on Feb. 23, Concert Nights at the Old Walls presents **Myra Beltran**'s Dance Forum at Plaza Moriones in Fort Santiago. Call Frances at 527-5385.

The dances, all choreographed by Beltran, include "At the Center of the Earth Originating," excerpts from "Folds of Midnight" and "The Romeo and Juliet Project."

Dancers performing with Beltran are **Katherine Sanchez**, **Donna Miranda** and **Nordic Caraig**.



Onstage GREENBELT

illusione

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CINEMA 1: SHALLOW HAL 10:30/ 12:50/ 3:10/ 5:30/ 7:50/ 10:10 R 18

CINEMA 2: COLLATERAL DAMAGE 10:30/ 12:50/ 3:10/ 5:30/ 7:50/ 10:10 R 18

Matinee: P80.00 - Screenings before 5:00pm, Monday thru Friday (Free Seating).
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1 THE MOTHMAN PROPHECIES	1 THE MOTHMAN PROPHECIES	4 VANILLA SKY	1 BRIDE W/ WHITE HAIR (Exclusive Screening)	1 SHALLOW HAL THX
2 COLLATERAL DAMAGE	2 RAT RACE	5 KATE &LEOPOLD	2 SHALLOW HAL	2 THE MOTHMAN PROPHECIES
3 SHALLOW HAL	3 SHALLOW HAL THX GUARANTEED SEATS	6 COLLATERAL DAMAGE	3 NOWHERE TO HIDE (Phil. Premiere)	3 COLLATERAL DAMAGE
4 IKAW LAMANG HANGGANG NGAYON		7 IKAW LAMANG HANGGANG NGAYON	4 Onstage ILLUSIONE FEB. 22, 23 & MARCH 1, 2, 7, 8, 9, 14, 15, 16	4 KATE &LEOPOLD
				5 RAT RACE

THIS WEEK'S EVENTS

The Ayala Mall Events

MAKATI

GLOBAL BEAUTY II (Crazy, Sexy, Cool)
Everything you need to know on fragrance, hair & style color, make up to get into the groove

SHOES+PERFORMANCE
ACCP presentation featuring show stopping numbers centered around five types of shoes: classic pointe, bakya, sneakers, ballet shoes and flippers
Glorietta Activity Center
Feb. 23, 2pm & 6pm, Feb. 24, 4pm

ISUZU CAR EXHIBIT
An exhibit featuring the latest Isuzu models.
Glorietta Activity Center
February 28, to March 3, 2002

ALABANG

ALABANG TOWN CENTER EVENTS
February 23
LI'L HANDS CLUB
4th ANNIVERSARY EVENT
Activity Center

Kids are sure to enjoy fun activities with with LI'L HANDS CLUB with parlor games, balloon sculpture, various arts and crafts, mascot appearances, special numbers and exciting raffles draws!

Registration starts at 10:00 am

CEBU

AYALA CENTER CEBU
LIST OF ACTIVITIES
For the Period Feb. 21 to 27, 2002

Activity Center
Feb. 23 (Sat.) - Child Development Center Cebu's Spring Festival
Feb. 24 (Sun.)
Little Love Act's Grand Competition (Cookie Decorating Contest for Dads & Kids)

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Nowhere to Hide

AN EXCLUSIVE PHILIPPINE PREMIERE

"A lunatic derby of cuts & bravura movie making fired from the barrel of a gun... 'Hide' is all verve & vibes, a rollicking blend of exhibitionistic vitality." - The New York Times

NOWHERE TO HIDE is a different kind of detective action film that overrides genre expectations. Action scenes are played out in unexpected places, and we see the essential element of cinema - movement itself - at work. The dynamic visual styles matched by an eclectical soundtrack that synthesizes past and current sensibilities. Written and directed by Lee Myung-Se, the story focuses on Woo, an eccentric detective whose search for a murderer takes him and his team of detectives into the heart of the city and out to the countryside on the trail of a most elusive man.

NOWHERE TO HIDE boasts a red-hot cast of Korea's top actors: International actor Park Joong-Hoon, veteran actor Ahn Sung-Ki, along with young talents Jang Dung-Kun and Choi Ji-Woo.

Only the recently relaxed censorship in Korea allowed for Lee to make a film with such violently portrayed policemen. Nonetheless, he says the police closely monitored the film while it was being made.

NOWHERE TO HIDE was featured at the 2000 Sundance Film Festival, and at the Museum of Modern Art/Film Society of Lincoln Centers 2000 New Directors/New Films festival in New York City.

Language: Korean with English Sub-titles

SKYFILMS NOKIA INQUIRER

BUSINESS

Editor **Raul O. Marcelo** ◉ *Assistant Editor* **Corrie S. Narisma**

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Gov't drops plan to lift tax exemption of AUVs

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE GOVERNMENT has dropped its plan to lift the exemption of vehicles with a seating capacity of 10 or more from paying excise taxes.

The Department of Finance's decision followed strong pressure from the Department of Trade and local car companies.

"We are dropping the plan to redefine automobiles . . . because I agree with the (DTI) that it would be counter-productive," Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho said yesterday.

Instead, he said the government would pursue a legislative measure that would change the basis of excise taxes from engine displacement and fuel type to selling price.

Camacho said a redefinition of automobile taxes that would specifically lift the exemption of vehicles with a seating capacity of 10 or more, including the so-called Asian utility vehicles, would be tackled alongside the legislation.

The government had wanted to restructure the excise tax on motor vehicles in two stages.

The first was through an administrative measure and the second was for Congress to amend the current tax system on automobiles and change the basis of the excise tax from fuel type and engine displacement to selling price.

The BIR had projected additional revenues of P500 million from the lifting of the excise tax exemption on 10-seater vehicles.

"By abruptly raising the taxes, the gains we foresee may even be negated by the loss in sales because the prices of the vehicles would likely double. And we may even lose out on the 10-percent VAT (value-added tax) they pay," Camacho explained.

The DOF's decision is seen to benefit the so-called sports utility vehicles (SUVs) or the high-powered luxury automobiles that are exempted from paying taxes because of the 10-seater rule.

Camacho denied that he was unduly pressured by the DTI and the car assemblers. "It really makes sense and I was convinced because we might just lose on revenue instead of generating them."

The finance secretary said his change of heart took place after a serious discussion with Trade Secretary Mar Roxas II.

Camacho said the DOF had asked the car manufacturing industry to submit a consolidated position on the issue of the excise taxation so these would be considered by the finance department when it submits a draft bill to Congress next month.

He said he was hopeful that the legislation that would amend the basis of excise taxes on vehicles from engine displacement to selling price would be passed within the year.

The problem, however, was that the industry could not unify its position on the issue. American manufacturers like Ford Motors Corp. and General Motors Corp., which produce vehicles with bigger engine displacements, favored the shift to selling price.

But other companies like Toyota Motors Corp. preferred to maintain the current scheme.

Huge PEACe bond profit draws diverse criticisms

By Margarita H. Debuque

(Third of a series)

SPECIAL REPORT

ON THE DAY of the auction, RCBC submitted a series of six bids, with equivalent yields or interest rates ranging from 12.248 percent to 13.4 percent. An early bird even at bidding time, the bank was only the second financial institution to send its bids that day.

The 10-year zero coupon bonds with profit-enhancing features turned out to be a big seller. The auction drew a total of 45 bids from 15 GSEDs, a third of which were foreign banks, and was four times oversubscribed with total tenders amounting to P137.08 billion.

The auction committee decided to award P35 billion worth of the bonds out of a maximum P50 billion it was authorized to issue and considered four of CODE-NGO's bids through RCBC (P10 billion at 12.248 percent; P10 billion at 12.368 percent; P10 billion at 12.488 percent; and P5 billion at 12.785 percent).

Since the Dutch method was followed, the committee pegged the rate at a uniform 12.75 percent annually on all the winning offers (that is, 12.785 percent rounded to the nearest 1/8 of one percent). This type of auction is followed in countries such as the United States because of its ability to elicit the bidders' true valuation of what is being sold. Bids of other participants ranged from 13 percent to a high of 18 percent.

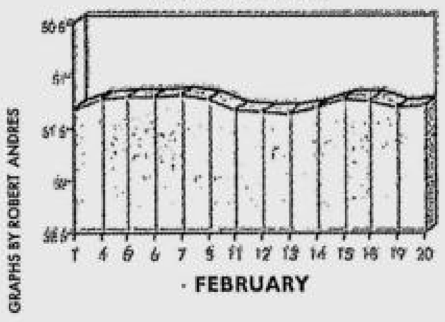
CODE-NGO hence cornered

HUGE/ B2

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

PESO - DOLLAR



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱51.28 = $1

As of 5 p.m., Feb. 20,2002

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As of 5 p.m., Feb. 20, 2002

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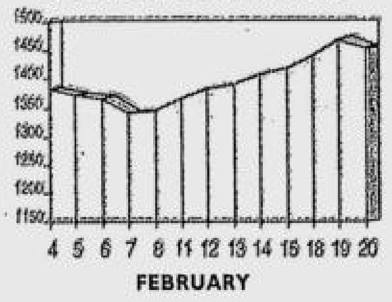
Feb. 20,2002

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

STOCK MARKET

Stocks down on 1st day of extended trading

STOCKBROKERS yesterday bid goodbye to long lunch breaks as the Philippine Stock Exchange stretched its trading hours for the first time until 2:30 p.m. to maximize opportunities from the recent surge trading activity.

The longer trading hours brought added liquidity even as the market was bound for some technical correction. The main PSE composite index fell 1.08 percent to 1,453.17 yesterday.

When the trading bell rang again at 1 p.m. to signal the start of 90 minutes of additional trading, floor traders at the PSE Tektite in Ortigas applauded the lengthened hours. The mood was jolly all throughout the day as brokers generated more business from the additional liquidity.

The market raked in another P470 million in value turnover in the afternoon after posting P916 million in the morning to end the day with P1.39 billion worth of total trades, more than double the average daily turnover of about P500 million last year.

Tambunting IPO okayed

THE PHILIPPINE Stock Exchange has approved the initial public offering of the Tambunting group's pawnshop chain TFS Inc. and its listing on the board for small and medium enterprises by April.

In a letter dated Feb. 14, PSE senior vice president Jose Cervantes informed TFS that the exchange had cleared the offering, which will be the first for the SME board this year.

TFS had tapped BV Partners Inc. as financial adviser and Keppel IVI Investments Inc. as issue manager. It is targeting an offering period of March 18-25 and its listing on the SME board by April 8 or 9.

Documents indicated that TFS plans to offer 30 million new unclassified common shares or 30 percent of its post-IPO shares at a price of P1.05 each.

Doris C. Dumlao

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Lord of daring (Part II)

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

READERS sometimes react to what I write because I write nothing but irresponsible lies and I've been doing it for the past 23 now.

Gosh, I even make a living out of it — paying rent, badgering my bosses for car plans and landing two other extra jobs out of it, mind you. I even win awards and receive citations every now and then. Not bad for irresponsible lies, I say.

In a letter published in the opinion section yesterday, a certain Ruben Carranza, who called himself a PCGG commissioner, which makes him a political appointee (i.e., *sabit* in our language) did NOT conclude that I sell this column to the highest bidder.

That was based on an incident that he claimed he knew about me. He could have concluded that I am, in a word, corrupt. He did not. Bravely, in another daring double-talk, he escaped the burden of proof, by saying it was what others could say about me.

And that, ladies and gentlemen, is where our taxes go. Now I fear for our republic. This "official" does not even know the difference between opinion and hearsay.

* * *

IT'S an opinion when I say this cute administration of Gloriaetta has a lot of useless political hangers-on like Carranza who contradict their boss every chance they get.

When Carranza talks about what others, just maybe, would have likely said about me, which was based on an incident only Carranza knew, it is hearsay. Clear enough, commissioner?

Under Martial Law, anyway, I had this silly hobby of writing in-depth news articles about the deals of the powerful Marcos cronies for the defunct Business Day.

Guess what—the cronies also went to my boss, and they also called me corrupt. It is so predictable. Anybody who happens to disagree with what reporters and columnists write says that press people are on the take. People always say it, like it goes with a reporter's job as much as libel cases. It is always the refuge of the mentally bankrupt.

* * *

FOR the issue is...well, come to think of it, I don't even know what Carranza, not for lack of trying, wanted to say in his tortuous, circuitous, hair-splitting, double-talking letter.

Thus I can only say, as a matter of opinion, and not hearsay, the letter must have come from a highly convoluted mind.

Well, such things happen, particularly when political hangers-on get some good dressing down from the boss – not once but twice. So what was he saying again?

It's not easy to decipher, but I shall endeavor to help the poor guy. It seems to be related with the $540-million investment of Japan's beer company Kirin in San Miguel. Kirin agreed to buy San Miguel's treasury shares at a 20 percent premium over the market price. San Miguel, in short, makes a lot of money.

Carranza, if I got him right, tried hard to explain what he did not say about the deal. Cute! He writes things he does not conclude and explains things he does not say!

* * *

WHAT Carranza did not say is, this cute administration must change Kirin's buying price, since the market price has already gone up from the time the deal was made.

He only said that this cute administration must STUDY such a move. And in my column I even called such an idea as stupid? (Pssst, it came out last Feb. 11!)

Okay, let's say when a guy like Carranza says something disturbing like that about a firm like San Miguel, the stockmarket does not even react. After all, Carranza only works for the PCGG. He is a commissioner. A big shot! The PCGG only wields tremendous power over a private company like San Miguel.

Well, San Miguel is just the biggest business in the country, whose shares are merely held widely by the public, both Filipinos and foreigners alike.

The market gobbles up every news on San Miguel. It minds things that guys like Carranza did not say he would do, but only wanted to study. Studying it is stupid? Well. . .

* * *

IN his hair-splitting letter, Carranza said he only wanted to study something which has never ever been done in any market in the whole wide world since the beginning of time.

And that is stupid? It's only something that nobody ever thinks of studying, not even in anybody's most drunken moment, much less getting it published in media, for all the market to read about. In other words, it's a complete waste of time. Useless!

Which was also essentially the reaction of Trade and Industry Secretary Mar Roxas. If we follow Carranza's idea, according to Mar, we cannot close any deal in the stockmarket. *Aray*!

Now, assuming Carranza, who is the most studious government official in this cute administration, wants to study it and forgets to say how he wants to study something which he has no authority to study, what do you call that? Don't tell me — it's amnesia!

You see, Mar Roxas has beaten him to the study. Carranza's boss, Gloriaetta herself, already tasked Mar Roxas to do all the studying. I thought that Gloriaetta's order should have been an obvious hint to Carranza to study other things instead.

Carranza's are the toes I don't mind stepping on. And if you don't step on anybody's toes, as Apong Oning used to tell my father, you haven't been out for a walk.

Huge PEACe bond profit draws diverse criticisms

From page B1

all the issues of the tax-exempt and reserve-eligible zero coupon bonds, as it had hoped to, allowing it to finally proceed with the issuance of PEACe bonds. Following an underwriting agreement with the group, RCBC Capital bought the bonds, which had a yield of 12.75 percent, at a price where the instrument's interest rate registered at 11 percent.

CODE-NGO national coordinator Danilo Songco said they were able to improve their contract with the RCBC group just prior to the auction date by upping the price at which RCBC Capital committed to buy the bonds, or equivalently, shaving the bank's hurdle rate from a yield of 11.6 percent to just 11 percent.

"When it became an auction, (we) had to be more flexible, because we needed to realize our target profit of P1 billion, which is our response to this growing problem of NGOs," he said. "So we had to ask for a lower yield at which they will buy the PEACe bonds. *Nakatawad pa nga si* Marissa (CODE-NGO chair Ma. Socorro Camacho-Reyes was able tó improve the price)."

Huge profit

With that curiously large margin, the organization earned a stunning P1.827 billion from the trade. In that trade, RCBC Capital paid CODE-NGO P11.996 billion for the bonds that it bought through RCBC for only P10.169 billion.

CODE-NGO's leaders claim it had been their intention all along to offer the fund to the entire NGO community. Of the total amount, about P1.4 billion went to CODE-NGO's account, while the rest was released as payment to RCBC (P240 million in underwriting fees) and its financial advisers, Capex Ventures Inc. and Seed Ventures Capital Inc.

The organization has likewise split the P1.4 billion it netted from the transaction into two.

Ten percent, he said, has been used to put up an endowment fund for the organization itself and about P1.3 billion to create a fund open to all development partners and managed by the Peace and Equity Foundation, which will be run by prominent professionals and civic leaders.

"This was really our plan," he maintained. "We kept just a small portion for our own organization and the larger amount we opened up to everybody."

The unusual profit earned by the CODE-NGO from the PEACe bonds has made the transaction easy target of criticism from all corners. Hard-boiled politicians and ideologues, who often sit on opposite sides of an issue, all allege misconduct behind the NGO's fund-raising scheme.

Many of the criticisms leveled against CODE-NGO relate to its behavior. Some NGO's criticize the group's "lack of transparency" and the way that it lobbied to secure "sweeteners" from the government in the form of tax exemptions and reserve eligibilities to enhance the bond's yield.

Words often used to define the group's approach to raising money for its pro-poor projects include "rent-seeking," "influence-peddling" and "political capitalism."

NGOs with think tanks such as the Freedom from Debt Coalition (FDC) and Action for Economic Reforms (AER) assert that while CODE-NGO's goals may be worthy of praise, the means by which they tried to achieve these were not justified.

Criticisms

FDC claims that "rules were bent and influence used" to collect the P1.4 billion fund, while AER believes the group "banked on political capital built during the campaign to oust President Estrada as well as personal connections" to secure such gains.

While the zero coupon bonds were eventually auctioned, AER says CODE-NGO nonetheless had privilege of information over "similarly situated groups." AAER's analysts argue in a position paper that other civil society groups could have likewise participated in the bidding by partnering with eligible government securities dealers (GSEDs) had they been presented the option.

"The particularistic granting of privilege could have been avoided if the whole process had been transparent; the whole NGO sector should have been consulted," they said.

But CODE-NGO shrugs off these observations and considers them as merely reflective of a lack of appreciation of the workings of the capital markets.

"If by transparency they meant that we should have announced it to the public before it was completed, then that's not regular in a capital market transaction," Songco said.

"It was initially intended to be a negotiated sale of the bonds to CODE-NGO which is not illegal or irregular so we did not see the need to make the information public. We didn't feel we had to discuss it because we planned to open the fund to everybody anyway," he added.

CODE-NGO's leaders talk of a paradigm shift their organization had gone through that has prompted it to take a wholly different path in generating funds for development projects.

Songco says that while others have stuck to the belief that NGOs should not earn profits, especially not as big as what their group has explicitly targeted, they believe otherwise.

According to the CODE-NGO's own study, the development community's biggest donors such as the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the US Agency for International Development (USAID) already cut their support to local NGOs by half in the mid-1990s and continues to do so today as they shift their funds and attention to regions such as Eastern Europe and Africa.

Representing more than 3,000 NGOs and cooperatives from around the country a few years earlier, CODE-NGO has seen many of its members close down due to a lack of funding bringing down the number to about 2,500.

"In our course of action, we have seen the severity of the problem and we can see the NGO community shrinking. In our minds, we knew we had to raise a large amount of resources to arrest this," Songco said.

Opposition senators meanwhile have upped the ante by accusing not only CODE-NGO and its financial partners of improper behavior but also government agencies, mainly the Department of Finance (DOF) through the Treasury bureau, for "rigging the auction" to favor the NGO.

An inquiry by the Senate finance committee is now underway to investigate the auction of the PEACe bonds as a result of a resolution filed by opposition Sen. Teresa Aquino-Oreta.

Collusion charge

Sen. Sergio Osmeña, a member of that committee, reported they are now looking into three ways wherein the result of the bidding "could have been fixed": through an information advantage afforded CODE-NGO, its financial advisers and the RCBC group; by manipulation under a manual auction, and through collusion among bidders.

Critics claim that government authorities allowed CODE-NGO to have advance information on the 10-year zero-coupon bonds since its financial advisers and RCBC, which actually structured the bond, had worked on the deal longer than the other dealers and were hence more familiar with its nuances.

AER cites information delays that allowed CODE-NGO and RCBC to have a "headstart" over the other government securities eligible dealers (GSEDs) since it was the party that lobbied for the bond's special features. FDC points to the lack of preparation time given to other market players given that this was a new type of bond with "neither a prospectus or tombstone issued," announcing the auction only one week ahead, revealing the issue's bank reserve eligibility only one day before, and releasing new information on the day of the auction itself.

Opposition senators note that the National Treasurer did not even bother to conduct a road show so that it could survey how much the market was willing to pay for these bonds. "If he had gone around and asked the banks how they valued the bond, then the government would have gotten a better rate."

Market players themselves, however, aver that they do not need an extended time period to evaluate the zero coupon bonds, which they say are not exactly cutting edge, having been around since the early 1980s in foreign financial markets.

"The market indicators are there and we already have our own ways of valuing a bond," said one banker. "In a market where news fly faster than you say them, it was not difficult to deduce the possibility," said another. "It's our business to hedge on various scenarios."

National Treasurer Sergio Edeza said that a gestation period is not required in most of its auctions since the Bureau of Treasury (BTr) caters mainly to GSEDs and financial institutions, which are already familiar with the eligibilities and their valuation.

Reputable managers

With their long experience in the business and the level of education of their managers, some of whom have experience working in foreign financial markets, these institutions "could quickly tag a price on any debt paper."

Edeza, treasurer of Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co. prior to his stint at the National Treasury, clarified that roadshows apply only when the issues are designed for public consumption, such as in the previous administration's Small Investor Program, and not for instruments like the recently issued zero coupon bonds which are useful only in portfolios of financial institutions with intermediary functions.

The so-called Erap bonds, though not an issue of the BTr but bid through its system, included similar profit-enhancing features that were announced and released in just two days, Treasury officials said. The only difference between that bond and the recently issued zero coupon is that interest payments of the latter are made on a "balloon basis" where the entire yield is given at the end of the period. The bureau's ordinary issues reportedly took just two to three days to issue, while the issues underlying the PEACe bonds were allowed one whole week.

"To the question of bending the rules, of impropriety, of intentional delay in the release of information, that's precisely why we asked for an auction and for the release of the information. Any advantage, as they would want to put it, have been erased by announcing the features of the bond," Edeza added.

The way that CODE-NGO applied for and received eligibilities making PEACe bonds eligible as capital and reserve investments of insurance companies even after it was bid off has also been a point of contention, which some NGOs term as another "information gap." Such eligibilities, however, were said to be "not very highly valued" by the market and that with this particular bond, dealers' "main interest" focused largely on liquidity reserve eligibility.

CODE-NGO argued that their actions were not illegal and merely reflective of their "creativity" as an institution and that the Insurance Commission "perfunctorily" grants such status to sovereign debt and even debt papers and investment products issued by private companies.

Opposition senators and the NGOs view the manual bidding of the bonds with suspicion, claiming that the Treasury could have easily manipulated the bids through this channel.

"They made it manual even if the formula they used was semi-annual (two interest payments in a year) just like an ordinary bond; they could have used their electronic system," Osmeña insisted. "That's their (Treasury's) excuse—that they don't have a computer program for zero coupon bonds."

He added that the price at which CODE-NGO and the RCBC group paid for the bonds (P10.169 billion for a face amount of P35 billion) actually corresponded to an interest rate of 13.1 percent and not 12.75 percent as the Treasury claims just to improve its performance.

Electronic vs manual

FDC insinuates that unlike an electronic auction where there is no way for a bidder to determine what his rivals are bidding, the manual process of the Treasury "leaves room for leakages that could influence the outcome of results."

GSEDs were allowed to fax their bids to the Treasury's Securities Origination Division until noon, making it highly possible for information to be leaked to another "favored" bidder so that it would win the auction.

The group also found it highly improbable for RCBC to corner the entire auction, with four out of its six bids winning the entire auction. They compute the chance of this happening as 24 out of 3,575,880 or 0.0007 percent.

The Treasury, however, said it conducted the auction manually since its electronic auction system, the ADAPs, cannot at present handle a zero coupon issue limited to 19 bidders and is not programmed to compute for issues with a tax-exempt feature. Since their system tends to lump together bids of dealers with the same price offer, the number of participants allowed cannot be monitored as required by the 19-lender rule.

A system has already been developed for zero-coupon bonds, Treasury officials clarified, but not the type that was auctioned which was loaded with special features. They say programming costs are high and the needed alterations not as straightforward as would appear.

Edeza said the manual method is often used for special issuances or in cases when the electronic auction system or dealer's terminals are down and hence not so unusual. Moreover, the BTr opened the exercise to public viewing through a glass-paneled auction room and with yields and volumes flashed via a wide-screen monitor.

The accusation of information leakage becomes moot, sources in the bureau claim, as official records show that RCBC, which bid in behalf of CODE-NGO, was only the second participant to fax its bids. The bank's series of bids, they say, arrived within the same span of time.

Osmeña's claim that the zero coupon bonds' yield was actually 13.1 percent is correct if one computes the rate at an annual compounding basis. But to make the yields comparable with its other issuances for reference purposes, the BTr computed the rates using a semi-annual compounding basis, which is standard practice in international finance markets.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Wednesday, February 20, 2002)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Bank of Phil. Islands	69.00	69	68	68	497,300
China Banking Corp.	580.0	580	580	580	4,000
Citystate Savings Bank	14.25	14.25	14.25	14.25	2,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	33.00	34.5	31.5	31.5	1,529,000
First E-Bank Corp.	1.47	1.74	1.74	1.74	18,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	215.0	215	213	214	392,650
Philippine National Bank	75.00	75	73	73.5	29,500
Phil. Savings Bank	39.00	29	29	29	1,500
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	13.75	13.75	13.5	13.5	45,800
Security Bank Corp.	19.50	19.5	19	19	28,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	22.00	22	21	21	357,900
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Bankard Inc.	1.44	1.44	1.38	1.38	264,000
Filipino Fund Inc.	.3700	.38	.37	.38	100,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1330	1355	1330	1355	2,780
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	.7800	.91	.78	.9	350,000
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1030	1045	1030	1040	30,060
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	32.50	32.5	32.5	32.5	18,000
Diversified Fin. Network	4.10	4.1	4	4	3,000
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	.6900	.73	.69	.7	19,350,000
Globe Telcom Inc.	800.0	820	800	815	45,160
IPOPLE Inc.	.8200	.82	.82	.82	150,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	.0825	.085	.08	.08	45,700,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	.3900	.39	.39	.39	10,000
Piltel	.5800	.65	.58	.58	39,960,000
Phil. Telegraph & Tel. Co.	.3400	.34	.34	.34	100,000
Phil. Long Dis. Tel. Co.	520.0	550	520	525	217,850
Invantage Corp.	.6100	.61	.61	.61	470,000
Philweb.Com Inc.	.0230.024	.023	.024119,400,000		
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	31.50	34.5	31.5	32.5	450,100
Manila Electric Co. B	51.00	54.5	51	52	5,268,800
Petron Corp.	2.00	2.08	1.96	1.96	20,739,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l SV	3.15	3.15	3	3.05	17,702,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	.3400	.34	.34	.34	720,000
Korenzo Shipping Corp.	.3400	.34	.34	.34	20,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip Inc.	.3900	.39	.37	.37	400,000
Phil. Nat'l Const Corp.	5.50	5.5	5.5	5.5	10,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.50	1.5	1.5	1.5	100,000
Union Cement Corp.	.7100	.71	.71	.71	20,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.18	2.18	2.18	2.18	011,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	13.75	13.75	13.5	13.5	265,800
La Tondeña Distillers Inc.	24.75	25	24.5	24.5	176,900
RFM Corp.	1.40	1.42	1.38	1.38	934,000
Swift Food Inc.	1.00	1	1	1	20,000
San Miguel Corp. "A"	49.00	49.5	49	49	296,900
San Miguel Corp. "B"	67.50	67.5	67	67	512,600
Vitarich Corp.	.4000	.4	.4	.4	120,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Atok-Big Wedge Co. Inc.	8.00	8	8	8	4,000
Abacus Con. Res. & Hldg. "A"	.6800	.68	.68	.68	90,000
Abacus Con. Res. & Hldg. "B"	.7100	.71	.7	.7	20,000
Ayala Corp.	7.10	7.1	6.9	6.9	7,146,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	1.98	2	1.88	1.88	2,633,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	12.50	12.5	12.25	12.25	1,100
Ajo.net Holdings Inc.	.8600	.86	.85	.86	690,000
APC Group Inc.	.2000	.28	.2	.22	5,510,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	.0080	.0085	.008	.008	293,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	.3800	.39	.35	.36	1,240,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs.	.2700	.27	.27	.27	100,000
Bacnotan Cons. Indus. Inc.	8.00	10.5	8	10.5	3,100
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	.2300	.23	.22	.22	620,000
Benpres Holdings Inc.	.9400	.96	.89	.9	51,360,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	.1600	.18	.15	.175	590,000
Crown Equities Inc.	.3900	.4	.39	.39	1,490,000
Southeast Asian Cement	.0800	.085	.08	.085	200,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	.3600	.38	.34	.34	4,190,000
Ebecom Holdings Inc.	.1150	.115	.11	.11	2,900,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	.0320	.047	.032	.045	2,200,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.10	1.12	1.08	1.08	705,000
First Phil. Hldgs. Corp.	33.00	33.5	32	32.5	1,032,900
Global Equities Inc.	.1850	.205	.185	.19	11,370,000
House of Investments Inc.	.3900	.39	.37	.37	840,000
Ionics Inc.	8.50	8.6	8.5	8.5	961,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	2.02	2.02	1.98	1.98	476,000
Macroasia Corp.	1.40	1.4	1.3	1.3	25,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. "A"	.0190	.019	.018	.018	700,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. "B"	.0200	.02	.019	.019	1,000,000
Medco Holdings	.2100	.21	.2	.2	1,430,000
Megaworld Corp.	.8800	.9	.86	.86	2,820,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	.4000	.41	.38	.38	16,430,000
Music Corp.	.3800	.42	.38	.39	19,470,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	.2300	.23	.215	.215	2,250,000
Solid Group Inc.	.4300	.43	.4	.4	570,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	.2200	.22	.22	.22	20,000
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	4.00	4.3	4	4.2	100,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Inc.	.0800	.1	.08	.1	500,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	.1800	.18	.175	.175	560,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	.2000	.2	.2	.2	20,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	.3400	.26	.32	.32	380,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Corro-Coat Inc.	1.44	1.44	1.44	1.44	10,000
Federal Chemicals Inc.	6.60	6.6	6.6	6.6	41,000
Interphil Labs Inc. A	1.00	1	1	1	50,000
Interphil Inc. B	1.20	1.2	1.2	1.2	20,000
Metro Alliance Holdings B	.4000	.4	.4	.4	100,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	.5500	.58	.55	.56	130,000
Picop Resources Inc.	.0975	.1	.0975	.0975	1,700,000
Pryce Corp.	.1000	.1	.1	.1	200,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	14.50	14.5	14.5	14.5	6,600
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	.5600	.59	.54	.54	60,420,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	.6500	.67	.63	.63	1,640,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	.4500	.45	.45	.45	300,000
Mondragon Int'l Phils. Inc.	.5100	.51	.5	.5	180,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	.3200	.32	.29	.29	160,000
Philippine Racing Clud	4.20	4.2	4.2	4.2	84,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Holdings Corp.	32.00	32.5	32	32.5	483,700
DMCI Holdings Inc.	765.0	795	765	765	11,930
Equitable PCI Bank-War	1.86	1.86	1.72	1.82	104,000
Globe Telecom Hldg. (PDR)	805.0	805	805	805	500
Omico Corp.-Warrant	.0016	.0018	.0016	.0016	162,000,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Y	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	38,600
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,800
Philweb.Com. Inc.-Warrants	.0060	.006	.006	.006	186,000,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	7.10	7.1	7.0	7.1	15.816
Araneta Properties Inc.	.22	.22	.22	.22	300,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	.4000	.41	.39	.41	540,000
C&P Homes Inc.	.32	.34	.31	.31	6,290
Cyber Bay Corp.	.56	.57	.54	.54	8,810
Empire East Land Inc.	.35	.35	.32	.32	14,720
Filinvest Land Inc.	2.36	2.44	2.34	2.36	24,150
Gotesco Land Inc.	.06	.07	.06	.07	700,000
Gotesco Land Inc "B"	.075	.075	.075	.075	1,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	.13	.13	.13	.13	300,000
Fil Estate Land Inc.	.42	.46	.41	.44	14,740
MRC Allied Inc.	.23	.25	.23	.23	2,570,000
Phil. Estates Corp.	.0725	.0725	.0725	.0725	100,000
Primetown Property Group	.47	.47	.47	.47	10,000
SM Development Corp.	1.18	1.18	1.16	1.16	147,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.3	7.4	7.2	7.3	9,882,000
Universal Rightfield Prop.	.09	.105	.09	.095	13,600,000
Urbancorp Realty Dev. Inc.	.2	.21	.2	.21	210,000
MINING					
Abra Mining and Industrial	.0046	.0046	.0046	.0046	15,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min. & Dev't.	2.4	2.9	2.4	2.9	3,131,000
Itugon Suyoc Mines "A"	.044	.048	.043	.043	106,600,000
Lepanto Cons. MNG. Co. "A"	.22	.22	.215	.215	400,000
Lepanto Cons. MNG. Co. "B"	.235	.235	.225	.225	1,020,000
Manila Mining Corp. "A"	.0042	.0042	.0042	.0042	14,000,000
Omico Corp.	.0048	.005	.0048	.0048	118,000,000
Polar Mines & Dev't. Corp.	.021	.021	.02	.02	22,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. "A"	.29	.29	.29	.29	30,000
Philex Mining Corp. "B"	.32	.32	.32	.32	420,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	.024	.024	.023	.023	14,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. "A"	.0065	.007	.0065	.0065	190,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. "B"	.007	.007	.007	.007	11,000,000
Pacifica	.018	.018	.018	.018	9,000,000
Sinophil Corp.	.12	.175	.12	.13	13,690,000
South China Resources Inc.	.24	.24	.24	.24	530,000
Vulcan Ind'l	.25	.26	.25	.26	460,000

CURRENCIES

Feb. 20, 2002 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.140511	1.000000	51.2890a
Japan	Yen	0.008536	0.007484	0.3838
United Kingdom	Pound	1.632870	1.431700	73.4305
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.146407	0.128370	6.5840
Switzerland	Franc	0.675939	0.592663	30.3971
Canada	Dollar	0.717709	0.629287	32.2755
Singapore	Dollar	0.623571	0.546747	28.0421
Australia	Dollar	0.590326	0.517598	26.5471
Bahrain	Dinar	3.025389	2.652661	136.0523
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.304950	0.267380	13.7137
Brunei	Dollar	0.625966	0.548847	28.1498
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000112	0.000098	0.0050
Thailand	Baht	0.026093	0.022878	1.1734
UAE	Dirham	0.310596	0.272331	13.9676
Korea	Won	0.000870	0.000763	0.0391
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.876800	44.9702

Japanese rating firm seen keeping RP outlook

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE JAPAN Credit Rating Agency is expected to maintain its investment grade rating for the Philippines amid concerns over the Macapagal administration's growth target, fiscal discipline and foreign fund-raising plans.

Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho said a visiting team from the rating firm was expected to recommend maintaining the Philippines' triple B rating, a mark equivalent to an investment grade.

"I told the Japan rating firm that their decision is being vindicated as other credit rating agencies are following suit and giving the Philippines a better mark," said the finance chief.

Still, the Japan Credit Rating Agency, in a letter to the government, asked whether a 4- to 4.5-percent growth in gross domestic product this year and a balanced budget by 2006 were achievable.

It also wanted to find out how the National Power Corp. would raise $750 million to meet its requirements this year when the national government itself still needed to raise more than $500 million from markets abroad.

Camacho said the Japanese rating would have a little impact on the government's borrowings from the Japanese market.

"If we borrow without guarantees, it would help. But most of the time, our borrowings from Japan are backed with guarantees," he said.

Last year, the government borrowed some 50 billion yen, roughly $390 million, from the Japanese private bond market with a guarantee from the Nippon Investment and Export to help bring down the rates.

A planned $400-million borrowing from the Japanese market this year would likely be backed by a guarantee from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation. The borrowing would help complete the government's $1.5-billion funding requirement this year.

The Japan rating firm also expressed concerns over the Philippine banking system's growing bad loans problem, as well as over the ability of the internal revenue and customs bureaus to raise enough cash to meet the government's needs.

Camacho said the decision of the Japanese rating agency to maintain its outlook, as well as Moody's Investors Service's recent upgrade of its sovereign outlook from negative to stable were well-deserved by the Philippines.

He dismissed reports that Moody's might have raised its outlook for the Philippines too early.

"I am not bothered that some people are having doubts because I believe the country deserves the improved outlook. We earned these points because since the middle of last year we were already hoping to change the negative outlook to stable," he said.

Viability of Tarlac natural gas find known in June

By Ronnel W. Domingo

PNOC Energy Development Corp. has said it will know in June whether a natural gas find in Tarlac is commercially viable.

PNOC-EDC chair Sergio Apostol told reporters it would take three to four months to complete a seismic survey of the area in Victoria, Tarlac, where natural gas had been flowing since Feb. 8.

PNOC-EDC drilled the Victoria-3 well using data from a decade-old seismic survey, according to persons familiar with the matter.

"We want to determine the actual size of the reserve," Apostol said. "Based on the present flow rate, our engineers estimate that it can support at least a 6-megawatt power plant."

PNOC-EDC hopes to prove a reserve of over 300 billion cubic feet of natural gas, which can fire up a 300-mw power plant.

Apostol said PNOC-EDC would ask Malacañang to decide whether to securitize PNOC-EDC's 85-percent share in the Victoria project or to sell the natural gas to interested buyers like Alsons Power Corp.

PNOC Exploration Corp. owns the remaining 15 percent of the venture, but the six firms that hold the right to explore the area may buy back, at most, 10 percent of it.

In an earlier statement, President Macapagal-Arroyo expressed optimism that the gas discovery would spur exploration and drilling projects that would, in turn, boost economic activities in Tarlac.

"We believe it is about time that we further develop Central Luzon as we introduce a new industry—the natural gas industry," Ms Macapagal said.

Energy Secretary Vincent Perez Jr. said he believed the gas find would generate interests from exploration and power companies.

The Philippine National Oil Co. said earlier that it would build a gas-fired power plant in Tarlac should studies prove the natural gas find had sufficient reserves.

Results of further tests will determine whether the Victoria gas reserve can support a power plant or only enough for a facility for compressed natural gas, which can be used as fuel for vehicles.

The Victoria find came amid government efforts to develop other sources of natural gas apart from the Malampaya reserve of 2.7 trillion cubic feet.

Petron earmarks ₱391M for refinery, marketing

PETRON Corp. reported yesterday that it was laying out some P391 million for projects in its Bataan refinery and for marketing.

Company officials said Petron was setting aside over P214.5 million to pay for contracts for its gas oil hydrotreating facility and to repair the main pier of its Bataan refinery.

Another P176.5 million is being earmarked for marketing, they added. Petron is planning to issue discount cards to fleet operators.

Petron officials declined to give more details, saying the country's top oil refiner was still preparing for other matters, including the disclosure of its financial performance for 2001.

Petron announced in June last year that it tapped the United States Trade and Development Agency to fund partially the basic engineering design of new refining facilities worth about $110 million.

Petron corporate communications manager Virginia Ruivivar said the USTDA had already given an initial $688,650 for an isomerization unit and a gas oil hydrotreater.

SEC to give public easy access to ownership files

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission is planning to establish a "name registry system" to give the public easy access to information about the owners of banks and listed companies.

The Capital Market Development Council, a public-private sector policy group that includes the SEC and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, approved last month a "corporate governance reform program" for 2002 to 2004 that called for, among others, the setting up of a name registry system.

The system will allow the public to know, through the Internet or onsite inspection, the identity of persons who own at least 5 percent of a bank or a listed company.

In a news briefing last week, former Finance Secretary Jesus Estanislao, chair of CMDC's task force on corporate governance, said a name registry system would prevent anyone from stealthily taking control of a bank or a listed company.

Estanislao specifically cited the case of Philippine National Bank. Beer and tobacco tycoon Lucio Tan gained control of the bank by accumulating shares using dummy corporations.

"Pretty soon, people should not be able to hide behind the brokers. The anti-money laundering law is strict on investors having accounts not under their names," SEC Chair Lilia Bautista said. *Elena R. Torrijos*

Gov't allocates ₱50M to expand La Union airport

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE MACAPAGAL administration has agreed to expand the San Fernando City Airport terminal in La Union to meet the growing traffic of Chinese and Taiwanese travelers stopping over in this Northern Luzon gateway.

Presidential Assistant for Regional Development North Luzon Renato V. Diaz said the government had budgeted P50 million to triple the terminal capacity of the La Union airport from 20 flights a week to 60 flights a week.

Diaz explained that the San Fernando airport had become a favorite transit point between China and Taiwan, which do not have direct flights to each other.

"The Chinese and Taiwanese could not fly directly to each other's country which is why they have to stop over in nearby countries such as Macau, Hong Kong and the Philippines when traveling," Diaz said.

Diaz said the San Fernando airport had become a popular transit point for Chinese and Taiwanese because of its proximity to Taiwan.

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People, Events & Products

aespinosa@inquirer.com.ph

Aries Espinosa, Editor

Lorenzana beefs up operations in Viz-Min

LORENZANA Food Corp. (LFC) expands its operations to Visayas and Mindanao through the establishment of a branch office in Cebu, simultaneous with the launching of several new products. This was announced by its president and general manager George U. Lorenazana during the company's 93rd anniversary celebration held recently.

The newly established branch will cater to Cebu and other major cities in the Visayas and Mindanao regions such as Bacolod, Iloilo, Davao, Cagayan de Oro and General Santos.

Lorenzana said that these strategic efforts are part of the company's vision to operate nationwide and aggressively expand to major markets. LFC is the original manufacturer and pioneer exporter of various Filipino products, including the Filtaste and Lorins product lines of condiments. Its Lorins Patis is currently the market leader in the fish sauce category.

"It's about time that we intensify our marketing efforts. Cebu is an excellent location that will cater to the Viz-Min region. We will monitor closely this market to cater to their cooking and dipping needs," said Lorenzana.

LFC has also upgraded its Navotas plant with new equipment and facilities. The modernization program is in line with the company's objective for HACCP (hazard analysis critical control point) accreditation by the Food Development Center (FDC), an accrediting body recognized worldwide. Accreditation will ensure that international manufacturing standards are met.

In addition, the company is currently implementing an intensified marketing campaign introducing LFC's new products: Lorins Chili Patis, Filtaste Original Sukang Paombong, Lorins Soy Sauce and Filtaste Gata. The new Chili Patis, fish sauce fermented with chili (siling labuyo), is a variant of the leading fish sauce brand Lorins Patis. Filtaste Sukang Paombong, on the other hand, is now aggressively marketed locally. This was first introduced to the Filipino market many years ago and has gone through a development process to what it is today—vinegar that enhances Filipino cooking.

The company's soy sauce is soya-based and is expected to lead the way in penetrating the Viz-Min market due to heavy usage by this market. Filtaste Gata will enable housewives to cook coconut-based meals conveniently and still capture the fresh taste of coconut.

"These popular Filipino products are created under strict LFC standards and formulated to cater to Filipino tastes. We're optimistic about the future because our brands are known worldwide," said Lorenzana.

Lorenzana added that a tri-media campaign will bolster the launch of these new products, alongside intensified promotional efforts. These include value packs for its condiments that are sold at leading supermarkets and groceries and in-store selling. Recently launched has been the Filtaste Kitchen Pack, a budget pack consisting of Lorins Patis, Filtaste Pure Cane Vinegar and Filtaste Gata.

LFC's other popular products in the local and international markets that carry the Lorins and Filtaste brands include pure cane vinegar, soy sauce, bagoong sauce, fruit preserves, and taba ng talangka.

LFC was established in Tagudin, Ilocos Sur in 1908, making it one of the pioneer and leading food manufacturers in the country. From the development of its premier product, bagoong, LFC has grown by introducing other lines under the Lorins and Filtaste brands for the domestic and export markets.

FUJI XEROX AWARDS TOP PERFORMERS
Philippine Fuji Xerox Corp. (PFXC) recently honored its outstanding sales achievers for 2001 in an awarding ceremony at the PFXC showroom in Ayala Avenue, Makati City. The event recognized the sales achievers' significant contribution to the company's mission of becoming the dominant provider of excellent document management products and services that enhance the productivity of people and organizations in the Philippines. Shown from left are Rodrigo Waje, Metro sales operations manager; Donna Ferro, marketing department manager; Romerico S. Serrano, PFXC president; Elaine Parreno, top sales officer from MSO; Toshikatsu Kanaoka, PFXC EVP for marketing and business operations, and Reli Candelaria, PFXC vice president.

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VICTORIA COURT'S FREE COFFEE
In celebration of the recent re-dedication of Liwasang Bonifacio (formerly Plaza Lawton), Victoria Court Malate gave away hundreds of free coffee and juice at the Liwasan. The Liwasang Bonifacio project is part of Mayor Lito Atienza's 'Buhayin ang Maynila' campaign. Shown in the free coffee/juice campaign were Jet Nera, resident manager of Victoria Court Malate (right) and Maki Pentinio, marketing coordinator.

LAND FOR BINANGONAN POOR
The family of Ronnie Rita receives a certificate of lot award from the National Housing Authority (NHA) represented by architect Eufemio Jacob, officer-in-charge for Rizal projects (left), during awarding ceremonies in Barangay Upper Tagpos, Binangonan, Rizal. 105 member-beneficiaries of the Saint Anthony Tagpos Homeowners Association Inc. (Sathoai) received certificates of lot award through the NHA's Land Tenure Assistance Program (LTAP). With them are Rizal Rep. Jack Duavit and Binangonan Mayor Cesar Ynares.

PRINCE AND ROCK N' ROLL TENNIS
In keeping with its commitment to help uplift the status of tennis in the country, Prince Rackets recently signed a sponsorship agreement with Rock N' Roll Team Tennis, a group of celebrities passionate about promoting the sport of tennis, especially among the youth. Shown is Rod Claudio (second from left), president of Sports Resources Inc (SRI), the exclusive Philippine distributor of Prince rackets, with Liza Enciso, SRI product manager, and the Rock N' Roll Team Tennis celebrity trainers (from left) Mandy Ochoa, Kier Legaspi, Junjun Toledo, Miguel Vera and Zoren Legaspi.

Aroma candle-making seminar in Makati

THE NEXT Step Events Planner, in cooperation with the Golden Treasure skills and Training Center, will conduct a one-day seminar on how to make scented aroma candles the easy way at the 23rd floor of the Enterprise Center (HSBC), 6766 Ayala Avenue corner Paseo de Roxas in Makati City on Feb. 27 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Among the topics to be discussed are costing and sources of materials, making the mold and decorative scented candles, coloring and dipping methods and combining essential oils such as the lavender, eucalyptus, lemon grass and other scented flavorings good for relaxation of the mind and body.

The event, dubbed "Rediscover...Feel Good and Look Good!," will also display products and offer services such as facial and skin care, health and food supplements and fitness equipment from Feb. 27 to March 1 at the same venue. The event will also have product sampling and demos.

The seminar is open to all professionals, students, OFWs, cooperatives and barangays, and individuals who would like to venture in the aroma candle business.

Those interested can coordinate with Leni, Tina or Joy at 813-0148, 753-5113 to 14, 893-9729, 313-0499, 0919-5843380, or 141-096790.

BITS Clips

Bedans' grand alumni homecoming

NAVARRO

THOUSANDS of Red Lions will return home to their alma mater for their grand alumni homecoming on Saturday, Feb. 23, at the SBC school grounds along Mendiola. The High School class of '77 led by batch president Jorge Garcia is sponsoring this year's homecoming with the theme "San Beda...Sandaan at Isa...Nagkakaisa!" The three-hour homecoming program promises to be an exciting one. Popular artists and Bedan talents have been invited to render special production numbers. The alumni registration will start at 4 p.m. at the school quadrangle, while the dinner show starts at 6 p.m. A special Eucharistic celebration has been organized prior to the program at 3 p.m. The highlight of the affair is the turnover ceremonies between HS Class '77 and next year's alumni homecoming sponsoring batch Class of '78 led by lawyer Constantino "Banjo" Navarro III.

UP art workshop

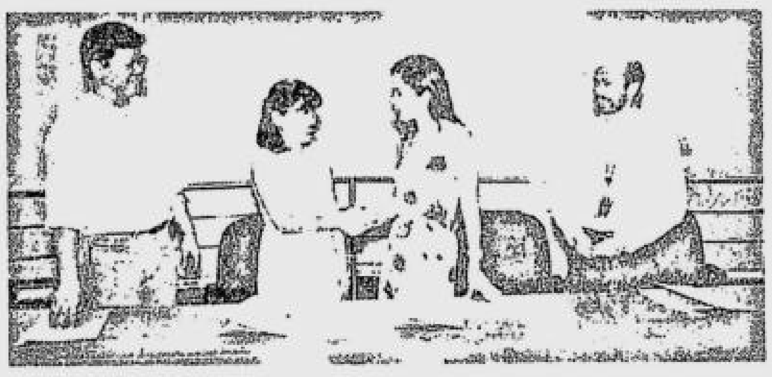
VISITING German artist Neeltje Bollen is in Manila to conduct her continuing art workshop series to be held at the Bahay Kalinao, UP Diliman today, Feb. 20. The painting seminar-workshop series, sponsored by the Sining Laro Para sa Batang Pinoy (Silab), was earlier conducted by Bollen in Pampanga, Bacolod City, Bohol, and in Tagaytay City. The artist explained that the workshop is a journey to the path of inner development, an awakening of consciousness to transform the inner landscape from a subjective, illusionary picture into a clear, objective, truthful picture of reality. The last leg of the seminar-workshop series will be held at 24 Acacia Street (near corner of Rosario Drive) in Barangay Mariana, New Manila, Quezon City from Feb. 22 to 24. For registration, call 279-7869 (Diwa) or 435-6890 (Omna).

Mansmith's first marketing seminar

MANSMITH and Fielders Inc., the industry leader in marketing and sales training, will hold its first marketing meet for the year, the 43rd Marketing Strategy and Plans, today, Feb. 20 to 22 at the Hotel Intercon in Makati. Seminar speaker is best-selling Filipino marketing author, Agora awardee, and one of the outstanding young men (TOYM) awardees of 2001 Josiah Go. For inquiries, call 723-6671, 4164662, or e-mail info@mansmith.net.

Pascual Labs' free consultations

PASCUAL Laboratories Inc., makers of Betadine and Potencee, will be having free consultation sessions in selected Mercury Drug outlets nationwide. Dubbed "Mother and Child Care Free Clinic," the consultation services will be rendered by family medicine doctors on Feb. 23, 24 and March 2. Mothers and their children are invited to participate, and have a chance to win free items by purchasing Betadine Feminine Wash or Potencee Drops and Syrup.



BREAD OF LIFE
'Man can't live with bread alone,' as the saying goes. But with the Baker's Kingdom and ABS-CBN Foundation Inc (AFI), a little bread can go a long way. Baker's is offering quality and best breads in town. For every purchase of selected bread, P1 will be given to ABS-CBN Bayan Foundation's Bantay Kinabukasan project for poverty alleviation. Shown for the MOA signing (from left) are Bantay Kinabukasan project director Benneth Panlaqui, CBS manager Imelda Cortezano, AFI managing director Gina Lopez and Bayan executive director Reno Rayel.

MULTIPURPOSE HALL TURNOVER
Quezon City Council majority floor leader lawyer Jesus 'Bong" C. Suntay spearheads the formal turnover of the Multipurpose Hall in Barangay San Vicente. The building construction is one of seven recent barangay infrastructure projects undertaken under Suntay's 3-year-old Bagong Simulain development program. Shown is Suntay with kagawad Willy Real during the inaugural ceremonies.

Gifts, premiums expo

COME June 5 to 7, Dusit Hotel Nikko will host the biggest gathering of exhibitors of business gifts, promotional ideas, stationery, toys and premiums. To be held at the grand ballroom, this prestigious event, aptly dubbed Gifts and Premiums, will showcase a variety of gift items for all occasions. The exhibit ranges from toys, novelty items, gift baskets, desk top accessories, woodcraft, stationery, to writing instruments, timepieces, wines and spirits, books and T-shirts. Organized by The Next Step Events Planner, the expo's highlights includes seminars, product presentations, competitions, and raffle prizes. For details, call the organizers at 893-9729/813-4801/753-5113 to 14, or at 0919-6880917/0917-5400259.

'The Love Letter' at Assumption

THE ASSUMPTION Community Theatre (ACT) of the Assumption College invites the public to watch its upcoming play "The Love Letter" on Feb. 22 and 23, with 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. shows, at the High School Multi-Purpose Hall, Assumption College, San Lorenzo, Makati City. Tickets are available at P70 each. For inquiries, call Frances at 0917-5386691 or 889-3068.

680 traders at Greenhills exhibit

680 MANUFACTURERS, dealers, distributors, suppliers, importers/exporters and other traders are currently exhibiting in the 9th Annual Furniture, Furnishing and Fashion Festival organized by Prime Asia Trade Planners and Convention Organizers (Patepco), a leading trade and consumer fair organizer for 16 years. The exhibit runs until March 10 at the Greenhills Shopping Complex. The 9th edition is the biggest, with participants to showcase various items at bargain prices. Showcased are antique and modern furniture and furnishing, cellphones and accessories, porcelain, jars and pottery, jewelry, houseware and appliances, paintings, corporate giveaways, sporting goods and accessories. Interested parties can call project coordinators Ai-Ai Babiera, Albert Castro, Celina Umali at the ground floor, Blue Mens Building, 707 Urduja Street, Barangay Village, Sucat Road, Parañaque City at 820-3862/826-8162/826-6732/829-3165.

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Republic of the Philippines
Supreme Court
MANILA

INVITATION TO BID

Interested suppliers/dealers are invited to pre-qualify and bid for the supply and delivery of 2nd quarter, *Office and Printing supplies and materials for the Supreme Court.*

Bids of pre-qualified bidders will be received by the Secretariat, Committee on Bids, Supreme Court of the Philippines, Taft Avenue, Manila before 2:00 p.m. on **March 20, 2002**. At said time and date, sealed quotations submitted will be opened publicly by the Committee on Bids in the presence of the participating bidders and/or representatives at the 4th floor Multi-Purpose Building, Supreme Court.

Interested suppliers/dealers who have not previously pre-qualified during the year 2002 may obtain the necessary pre-qualification requirements from the Secretariat, Committee on Bids, Office of the Administrative Services, Supreme Court, which should be submitted on **March 13, 2002** at 2:00 p.m., 4th floor Multi-Purpose Building, Supreme Court. A Pre-bid conference of qualified bidders will be held on **March 15, 2002** at the same time and place. Only bids of pre-qualified bidders will be entertained at the time of bidding.

Proposal forms., Terms and Conditions and list of office supplies subject of this particular bidding will be furnished to pre-qualified bidders, after payment of a non-refundable P 200.00 fee.

The Committee on Bids reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any defects or informalities therein, or accept any bid/s or offer/s which it may consider to be advantageous and beneficial to the government.

March 19, 2002.

(Sgd.) **JOSE P. PEREZ**
Chairman
Committee on Bids

(PDI--Feb. 21, 2002)

Republic of the Philippines
Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
Datu Odin Sinsuat Municipality
OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL MAYOR
Dalican, Datu Odin Sinsuat, Maguindanao

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

1. The Government of the Republic of the Philippines through the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) has received a loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for Agrarian Reform Communities Project (ARCP). It is intended that part of the proceeds will be applied to eligible payment under contract for rural infrastructure component for which this invitation is issued.
2. The Local Government Unit (LGU) of DATU ODIN SINSUAT as implementing partner of DAR for ARCP, invite prospective bidders to apply for eligibility and if eligible, to bid for the: CONCRETING OF BAGOINGED FARM TO MARKET ROAD.
3. Eligibility statement forms and bidding documents may be secured by interested bidders at the Office of the Chairman, Bid and Award Committee (BAC) upon payment of non-refundable fee of THREE THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED PESOS (P3,500.00) per set. Interested bidders may obtain further information at the same address.
4. Submission of application for eligibility must be received in sealed envelopes on or before **March 28, 2002** at DAT Odin Sinsuat Municipal Hall addressed to: The Chairman, Bid and Award Commitee, Municipality of Datu Odin Sinsuat.
5. A Pre-bid conference shall be held on **March 21, 2002** at Datu Odin Sinsuat Municipal Hall, Office of the Chairman, Bid and Award Commitee (BAC).
6. The submission and opening of bids will be on **March 28, 2002** at Datu Odin Sinsuat Municipal Hall. Late bids will not be accepted. The bid shall accompanied by GSIS bid security of 21/2% of the approved budget or its equivalent and to be posted in favor of the LGU. The bid security shall be valid for 120 days.
7. The approved budget for this project is Five Million Six Hundred Twelve Thousand Four Hundred Eighty Eight and Ninety Two Centavos (P 5,612,488.92).
8. The BAC reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any defect or formality, assume no obligation whatsoever or indemnify to the bidder for any expense or loss that may incur in the preparation of bid and to accept the bid must advantageous to the Government. The provision of PD 1594 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations as amended August 2000, shall apply to this invitation.

(Sgd.) **DATU OMBRA Q. SINSUAT**
Municipal Mayor
Chairman, Bids and Award Committee

(PDI--Feb. 21 & 25, 2002)

Connecticut Superior Court J.D. of Fairfield at Bridgeport
Return Date: February 26, 2002
RE: Escarnita F. Palacios vs. Mariano I. Pangilinan

ORDER OF NOTICE

The Court has reviewed the Motion for Notice by Publication on Irretrievable Breakdown. The Court find that defendant's whereabouts are unknown and that all reasonable efforts to find Mariano I. Pangilinan have failed. The Court finds that the defendant's last known address was 252 Concepcion, San Pablo City, Manila, Philippines.

The Court Orders that notice be given to the defendant by placing a legal notice in The Daily Inquirer, a newspaper circulating in the City of San Pablo, Manila, Philippines.

Containing a true and attest copy of the Order of Notice, and a statement that Automatic Court Order have been issued in the case as required by Section 25-5 of Connecticut Practice Book and are of the complaint on file with the Court.

The notice should appear before **February 14, 2002** and proof of service shall be filled with the Court.

Superior Court Asst. Clerk Robert A. Wilock II

The within and forgoing is a true and attested copy of the original in my hands for publication.
Charles M. Valentino, Sr., State Marshal/Fairfield County

(PDI - Feb. 14 & 21, 2002)

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Stock Certificate of IMASEN PHILIPPINE MANUFACTURING CORPORATION under the name of NAOYUKI NOBE S.Cert.No.18 w/1 Share Dated March 23, 2001.If no contest presented w/in 3 consecutive weeks of publication,new cert. will be issued.(PDI-Feb.14,21&28, 2002)

Republic of the Philippines
ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City

IN THE MATTER OF THE
APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL
OF THE REVISED RATE
SCHEDULES IN COMPLIANCE
WITH SECTION 36 OF REPUBLIC
ACT NO. 9136 AND ERC ORDER
DATED OCTOBER 30, 2001, AND
FOR APPROVAL OF APPRAISAL
OF PROPERTIES, WITH PRAYER
FOR PROVISIONAL AUTHORITY

ERC CASE NO. 2001-900

MANILA ELECTRIC COMPANY,
(MERALCO),
Applicant.
x---------------------------------------x

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES:

Notice is hereby given of the filing by applicant Manila Electric Company (MERALCO) on December 26, 2001 of an application for approval of its revised rate schedules in compliance with Section 36 of Republic Act No. 9136 and ERC Order dated October 30, 2001, and for approval of appraisal of its properties with prayer for provisional authority, docketed as ERC Case No. 2001-900. The Revised Rate Schedules will result in an increase in applicant's average overall tariff by P1.1228 or 19.6% of its November 2001 average of P5.7345/kWh.

The Commission has set the application for hearing on March 11 and 12, 2002 at ten o'clock (10:00 AM) in the morning at the ERC Hearing Room, 15th Floor, Pacific Center Building, San Miguel Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City.

All interested parties who may wish to comment on or oppose the said application should file their comments and/or oppositions on or before the date of hearing. Such parties who may wish to have the details of the application and who shall have manifested to the Commission their desire and intention to participate actively in the proceedings, may request that before the date of hearing, they be furnished with copies of the application by the applicant, which is hereby directed to furnish the parties making such request with copies of the application and its attachments. Likewise, any such interested party may examine the application and other pertinent records filed with the Commission during the usual office hours.

WITNESS, the Honorable **FE B. BARIN**, Chairman, and the Honorables **MARY ANNE B. COLAYCO, OLIVER B. BUTALID, CARLOS R. ALINDADA** and **LETICIA V. IBAY**, Commissioners, Energy Regulatory Commission, this 1st day of February, 2002 at Pasig City.

(Sgd.) **FRUCTUOSO C. LAGUNZAD**
Officer-in-Charge
Office of the Chief Executive Officer

(PDI -- Feb. 14 & 21, 2002)

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"He will wipe away all tears from their eyes,
There will be no more death,
No more grief or crying or pain,
The old things have disappeared."
Revelation 21:4

DR. FELINO CASTRO PALAFOX

(UST College of Medicine Class 1941)
(Past District Deputy - Knights of Columbus District L-03)
(Past President - Ilocos Norte Medical Society)
(Past Secretary/Treasurer - Philippine Medical Association)
(Past National Project Director - Philippine Medical Association Family Planning)

Peacefully joined his Creator at the age of 84.
(September 17, 1917 - February 19, 2002)

His beloved spouse **Mrs. Natividad Agcaoili Albano Palafox**

Children, children-in-law, grandchildren and great grandchildren
Gaudencio & Teresita Luna (Kenneth & Maricris, Eric & Mary Jean - Ericka & Therese, Faye Marie)
Lauro & Fe Corazon de la Cruz (Kathlyn, Amiegen, Feldrian, Laissez Faire)
Mary Margaret & Federico Domingo (†) **(Maybel & Reggie Reyes; Tina & Bernice, Michael, Jonathan)**
Felino, Jr. (Jun) & Wilma Villanueva (Katrina, Karmi, Philip Kahlil)
Fernando & Filipinas Basa (Wendell, Jennifer, Donnabel)
Francisco & Marilyn Crisostomo (Maureen, Jeffrey, Joanne, Jane)
Joseph & Lourdes Cruz (Trixie, Nico)
Mary Josephine I (†)
Mary Hildegarde & Douglas Mendoza (Madeleine, Michèle, Mariel)
Liborio & Marilou Juan (Dorothy)
Maria Corazon & Eliezer Aczon (Shelah, Stephanie, Sienna)
Mary Josephine II (†)

Brothers, sisters/brothers- and sisters-in-law **Ernesto & Constancia, Jesus Infante** (†) **& Fe, Estellita & Antonio** (†) **Castro, Dolores & Isagani Madamba, Antonio, Evelyn** (†) **& Glenda, Teresita & Nemesio Castillo, Carmen & Francisco** (†) **Ranada, Pastor** (†) **& Jean Albano, Anita & Benjamin** (†) **Carpio, Esperanza & Federico** (†) **Sales.**

Relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for his eternal happiness in heaven.

His remains lie at the Palafox Family Residence, Bacarra, Ilocos Norte.

Interment will be on Saturday, February 23, 2002 at the Bacarra Catholic Cemetery after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at St. Andrew Parish Church.

In lieu of flowers, donation to the Laoag Carmelite Monastery will be highly appreciated.

We, the Architects, Designers, Planners, Staffers, Associates and Partners of

PALAFOX ASSOCIATES

condole with the family of the late

DR. FELINO CASTRO PALAFOX

(Father of our Founder, Architect **Felino "Jun" Palafox, Jr.**)

We condole with his beloved wife
Mrs. Natividad Agcaoili Albano Palafox;
children, children-in-law, grandchildren, great grandchildren,
brothers and sisters, other relatives and friends.
We request the pious readers to pray for his
eternal happiness in heaven.

Dr. Felino C. Palafox joined his Creator
on February 19, 2002 at the age of 84.

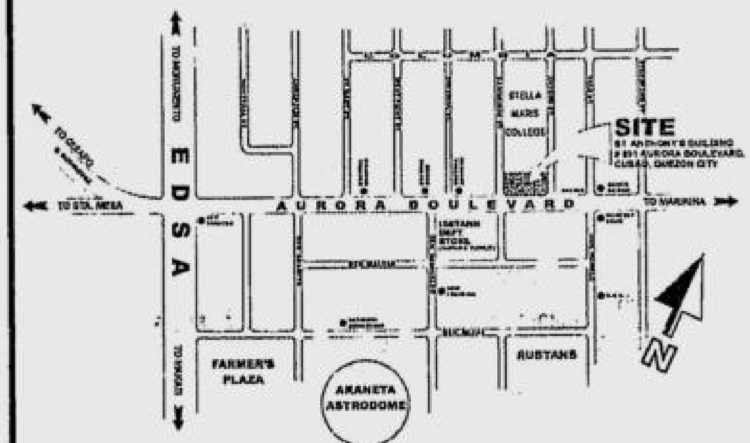
His remains lie in state at the Palafox Family Residence in
Bacarra, Ilocos Norte.

Interment will be on Saturday, February 23, 2002 at
the Bacarra Catholic Cemetery after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at
St. Andrew's Parish Church.

A memorial service will be held on Saturday, March 2, 2002
at 4:30 p.m. at St. James the Great Parish,
Ayala Alabang Village, Muntinlupa City.

Eye has not seen, ear
has not heard, nor
has it so much as
dawned on man what God
has prepared for those who
love Him.
I Corinthians 2:9

INQUIRER CLASSIFIEDS



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and
the life.
No one
comes
to the
Father
except
through
Me.
John 14:6

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Whoever serves Me must follow Me; and
Where I am, my servant also will be.
John 12:16

EUFEMIA S. BUENAVIDES

Peacefully joined her Creator
on February 18, 2002 at the age of 89.

Her bereaved children **Fe & Fred, Lydia & Amado, Aida & Mel, Victor & Linda, Rosemarie & Jun, Pepe & Cadad, Myke & Malou** and **Connie & Jhun**; grandchildren **Vien & West, Bambie & Yolly, Alsid & Fe, Eric & Bevs, Val & Tere, Sig & Candy, Fredel & Paul, Fredes, Manny, Malou & Celso, Julius, Jing, Melvin & Liza, Melchor & Aileen, Melan, Michael, John, Vivian, Sandra, Lanie & Martin, Jim, Dean, Astrid, John Jeremy, Jose, Vincent, Julian, Samuel, Leah Mae, Marilyn, Ghenny, Amylou, Brian, Johan** and **Chelo**; great grandchildren **Nikki, Bambinello, Colleen, Camille, Eric Jr., Valerie, Stephanie, Cassandra, Caterina, Maricel, Arielle, Devin, Ethan, Meliza, Poch** and **Daniel**, request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at St. Martin's Chapel, Sto. Domingo Church, Quezon Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina on Saturday, February 23, 2002 after the 2:00 p.m. Mass.

REYNALDO "Ding" SOTO

Went home to his Creator on February 19, 2002.

His wife **Mely**; daughters **Ching** and **Long**; son **Ito**; sons-in-law **Keith Nunokawa** and **Manolette Poniente**; daughter-in-law **Candy**; grandchildren **Cara, Miko, Yoshi, Anna** and **Nina**, and the rest of his family request the reader to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Forest Lawn Memorial Park, Covina Hills, California. A Mass will be offered at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 21, at the Holy Family Church, East Capitol Drive, Barrio Kapitolyo, Pasig, Metro Manila.

Interment will be on Monday, February 25, 2002, in Covina Hills, California.

MANUEL INGALLA-DEL BARRIO, SR.

(Sta. Rosa, Nueva Ecija)

Peacefully returned to his Creator on February 19, 2002
at the age of 85.

His bereaved children **BABY, LEILA & VIC, CELIA, VIC** and **TET**; grandchildren **MICHAEL & PRINCESS, VINCENT, CHARMAINE, KEVIN, PAMELA, NIKKI, MONIQUE, MIGO, BRION** and **TRON** and great granddaughter **PATRICIA NICOLE**; brothers, sisters, in-laws, nephews, nieces and other relatives request the pious readers to pray for the repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at the Capitol Memorial Chapels, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Sunday, February 24, 2002 at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina after the 2:00 PM Mass.

ELENA DAYRIT GOMEZ VDA DE CABRAL

of Mexico, Pampanga

Joined her Creator on February 20, 2002
at the age of 102.

Her bereaved children **Ruperto** (†), **Josefa, Letty, Adela**; children-in-law, grandchildren, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at their residence in Mexico, Pampanga.

Interment will be on February 23, 2002, after the 3:30 PM Mass at the Sta. Monica Parish Church.

The Board of Directors, Officers and Staff
of
IMUS RURAL BANK, INC.
Imus, Cavite

mourn the untimely demise of

Jose Virata Jamir

IRBI Board of Director and
Former Mayor of Imus, Cavite

on February 19, 2002 at the age of 77.

We join his bereaved family, wife **Safora Centeno**; children and in-laws **Joselito Amormio** and **Emilou Bidan, Fe Delilah** and **Renato Perez, Alan Dexter** and **Gladys del Rosario, Jose Rosendo** and **Nelin Reyes, Jose Joy Ramon** and **Annie Duhay, Jose Carlos Daniel** and **Rosemarie del Rosario, Rhea Claribel** and **Edwin Balcruz**; grandchildren, great grandchildren, brothers and sisters, nephews, nieces, relatives and friends in their prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the family residence at 124 Medicion II-A, Imus, Cavite.

Interment will be on Sunday, February 24, 2002 at Angelus Eternal Garden, Imus, Cavite after the 3:00 p.m. Mass at the Imus Cathedral.

"Come to me all you who are weary
and I will give you rest."
Matthew 11:28

Remedios Gonzalez Chenoweth

1914 - 2002
Candelaria, Zambales

Passed away and joined her husband
***ARTHUR THOMAS CHENOWETH** on February 19, 2002.*

Her bereaved sisters **Rosita, Candelaria, Leonor & Anita**; children **Jean & Rene Requilman, Robert & Minerva Chenoweth, Albert** (†) **& Narcisa Chenoweth, Elizabeth & Roy Ecoff**; grandchildren, great grandchildren, nephews, nieces, family and friends.

Her remains lie in state at Chapel N of Loyola Memorial Chapels Inc., Guadalupe, Makati City. Viewing will be from 6:00 p.m. of February 21, 2002 until 11:00 a.m. of February 24, 2002 after a Service at Loyola Memorial Chapels Inc.

Interment will follow at Loyola Park, Marikina City.

Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

MA. CRISTINA ZARATE-SUNGA

of Biñan, Laguna and RCBC

who joined the Lord on February 11, 2002

wish to thank all of you who, by way of
your presence, prayers, thoughts, flowers,
offered Masses, solace, and comfort.

We thank all of you for joining us in remembering her.

God bless you all.

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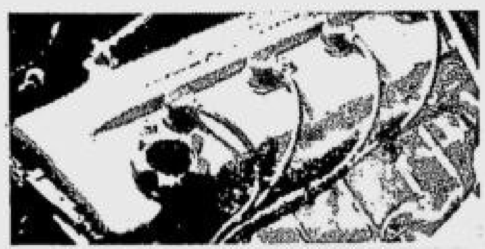
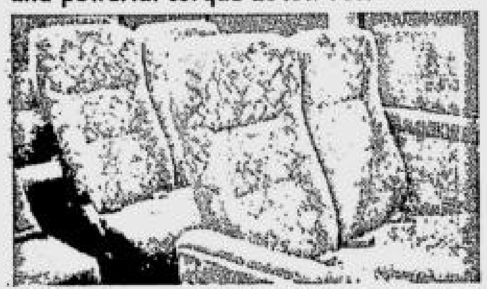
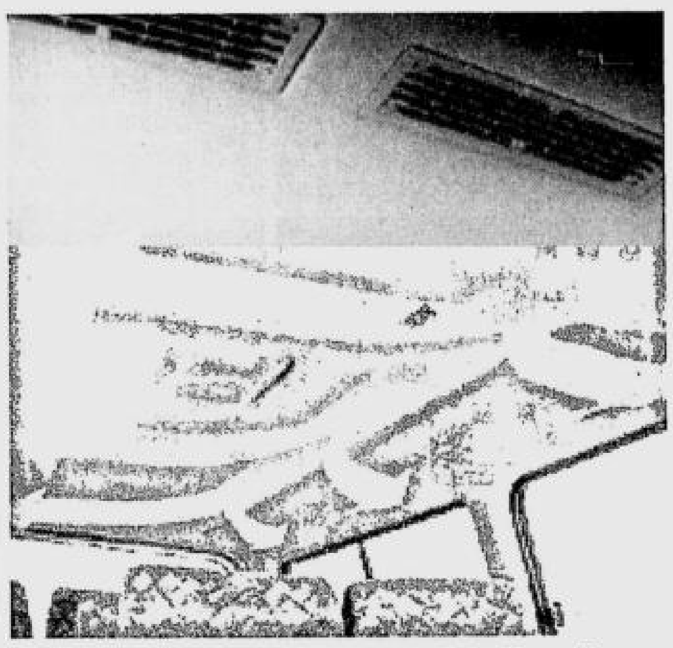


THE URVAN Estate's powerful ZD30DD deisel engine provides brisk acceleration and powerful torque at low rev.



WITH INDIVIDUALIZED seats, the Urvan Estate promises comfortable ride no matter how long the trip.



AIR-CON vents that run the length of the Urvan Estate make cooling equally apportioned throughout the van.

Ultimate family van launched in RP mart

By Charles E. Buban

CARPOOLING the kids to school. After-school team transportation. Fun-filled weekend getaways. Summer vacations to the beach. Whatever the job, there's a new van that can carry out all these chores. Called the Nissan Urvan Estate, this latest offering from Universal Motors Corp. is dubbed the ultimate family vehicle.

The family will surely appreciate the comfortable, ergonomic front seats and back seats of the Urvan Estate. Unlike other family vans, the Urvan Estate is equipped with nine individual reclining high back main seats on all rows, including the rear. The seats support the natural s-curve of your back to reduce lower back pains that are usually associated during long drives.

One of the main innovations for a van this size is the rear air-conditioning system that provides individual ventilation for each row to keep passengers cool and resting comfortably no matter where they are seated.

The Urvan Estate boasts of family-size dimensions that can easily accommodate 12 people and still has generous legroom to spare. "The Urvan Estate is a fresh addition in the light commercial vehicle segment. It's been a long while since we have seen a van this luxurious and comfortable," says Lani de Leon, UMC advertising and promo senior manager, during the van's launch early this week.

Comfortable driving

The Urvan Estate has thoughtfully designed its interior with comfort and convenience with the driver in mind. Consider the following dashboard features:

- Easy-to-read instrument gauges carefully designed for at-a-glance recognition to lessen stress on the eyes.
- Thicker steering wheel to provide form, comfortable grip combined with a highly improved power steering.
- Lower center tray that can safely hold two 500-ml drink bottles and is neatly positioned within arm's reach.
- Newly designed ZD30DD 3-liter diesel engine with direct injection, electronic control and DOHC for improved fuel economy and engine power.
- Redesigned body construction that lessens body vibration considerably to reduce driver stress and exhaustion.

Surely with its new features and redesigned body construction, the Urvan Estate is good news for big families. Parents will appreciate the comfortable interior as they will no longer have to hear "Are we there yet?" since their kids while away the hours playing or dozing off.

THE BOLD look and eye-catching design of Urvan Estate sets a new standard for commercial vehicles of the 21st century.

INITIAL IMPRESSIONS

Not merely an 'Estate' of mind

By Raymond B. Tribdino
Contributor

NISSAN's new Urvan Estate is not a mere cosmetic upgrade of the well-received Urvan Escapade and the very commercial Urvan Shuttle. Though much of the running gear is similar across the model lineup, the Estate promises a smoother, easier ride with major changes to the suspension and an all-new engine borrowed from the mighty Nissan Patrol.

The 3.0-liter ZD30DD engine ups the power from the standard Urvan to 105 ps, about 50ps short of the Patrol's turbocharged powerplant. Neck-snapping acceleration from the diesel burner is not possible but the Estate guarantees a better off-the-light launch than its closest competitors, Toyota's Hi-Ace and Mitsubishi's L300 Exceed.

Additional power comes mainly from the bigger displacement and the electronically controlled direct injection fuel induction system. Direct injection not only simmers down nasty vibration associated to diesels but also decreases engine oil temperature to significant levels. Injection electronics and a well-spaced gearing (with a lot of low to mid-range punch) improve fuel efficiency, thus increasing the effective use of engine power.

On paper at least, the wide torque spread is more than ample to handle the full 12-passenger load. Body rigidity has been improved with increased cabin integrity resulting in a vehicle that is not only built for the long haul but with safety as a high point. The enhancements to the body construction, which includes redesigned stress points mid-ship and smaller tolerances in the various body components leads to low vibration. This should mean less squeaks and creaks.

Styling for safety is how Nissan describes the new shape of the Estate. It reeks with European styling cues, evident in the Caravelle-like rear section and the Vito-like nose and headlamp assembly. Aerodynamics too has been improved with new upward and lateral angles. The real motivation however for the revisions up front is to increase driver and front passenger safety by providing for an impact-absorbing crushable zone. Very useful in case of a frontal collision, and something not many flat nose vans can boast of.

Inside, the Urvan Estate exudes luxury uncommon in vans of its class. Though Toyota's Hi-Ace Grandia may rival it in terms of overall feel, the Estate's new approaches to the positioning of the aircon vents, interior lighting and available seating are very thoughtful. Leg, hip, shoulder and head room is more than needed but the all-important stretch room (available space under the seats by which passengers can stretch their legs) is excellent while adjustable seat backs on all cabin seats add to overall comfort.

In the cockpit, many tiny details make for improved driving. Cubbyholes, cupholders and useful pockets are aplenty. The white-faced instrumentation is clustered logically and most of the oft-used and important controls are within finger's reach. A novelty in the Estate is the improved column stalks for the headlights and wipers, which have also been lifted off the Patrol. The ease of use of the controls, a thicker steering wheel and the better-than-normal ergonomics for the driver are big pluses.

Nissan is serious in dominating the diesel-engine luxury van market in the same manner it has done with the Frontier in the pickup segment. The Estate seems to be a winner. Find out if it can really deliver on its promises once INQUIRER Motoring test-drivers get their hands on its steering wheel.

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Let's rename it to Nissan Marathon, OK?

FULL TANK

Al Mendoza

I MISSED last night's bash at Strumms's hosted by Nissan. As usual, Tonette Lee understood.

But I heard Nissan used the occasion to unravel the year's biggest secret in motoring (tell me, it's true, Tonette?). And that is, that Nissan will revive the Pan Philippine Marathon.

Held three times already, the last one was in 1995, the Pan Philippine Marathon was a smash hit as it became virtually the benchmark for success of how a car is to be manufactured.

* * *

Like the first three, this year's run will cover 31,000 kilometers. The 1.6 Nissan Sentra Exalta will be used to cover practically the entire archipelago. The odyssey will start in Manila, cascade down the Visayas and Mindanao and come back to Luzon.

The Marathon will be covered in 30 days, can you believe that?

That's 1,000 km a day, buddies!

* * *

The event has never been matched by any car company hereabouts. I must give credit to Vir Diwa, that Nissan human dynamo, for having the courage to revive it. Vir has seen it fit to reinvent the Marathon if only to remind the motoring public that such a banana exists in this republic.

Four drivers will board the Exalta every day. Their only rest during the 1,000-km trip per day is called the "bathroom stop."

Just imagine yourself driving from Laoag City up North to Legazpi City down South—almost nonstop. That's almost 1,000 km already. But of course there'll be four of them driving the Nissan.

Still, that's a punishing trip. Only the durable can really survive it.

Among those being tapped to man the car are Willie Ingles and Andy Dysangco, two veterans with brilliant careers in motor racing.

To the drivers, good luck.

To Vir, Tonette and the rest of the Nissan executives behind this motoring milestone, I have but one suggestion. Why not rename the event to Nissan Marathon? The Pan Philippine Marathon is too long a name. Nissan Marathon easily registers in the mind, *di ba*?

To be frank, when I heard about plans to revive it, I forgot that the Pan Philippine Marathon was a Nissan babe. And to think that, if I'm not mistaken, I covered its launching when the inimitable Ronnie Pasola (may his soul rest in peace) conceptualized it.

Oh, well, how time flies.

* * *

And now a word from our "Boss." The "Boss" being you, the readers. Below is a letter from one of the bosses.

"What you wrote in your column on Feb. 14 about the 'delay in the registration of newly bought motor vehicles' prompted me to inquire about it from the LTO.

"I found out that in registering a new or newly bought motor vehicle, the vehicle owner-applicant needs to present the following supporting documents:

"1. The Certificate of Tax Payment from the Bureau of Customs. This piece of document is the basis for the Stock/Sales Report that the importer or the assembler needs to submit to the LTO in order to secure the birth certificate of the motor vehicle (known as the Certificate of Confirmation or CC). The CC, in turn, becomes the requisite supporting document when the motor vehicle is registered.

"2. An official clearance from the PNP-TMG. In compliance with RA 6539 or the Anti-Carnapping Act of 1972, the LTO requires this clearance to prove that the vehicle to be registered is not stolen or carnapped.

"3. Insurance Certificate of Cover.

"If any of the above documents is not presented, the vehicle cannot be registered.

"There have been instances when the LTO does not process motor vehicle registration because of the nonsubmission of the stock report by the importer or the accredited dealer so that a CC can be issued. It is very important to understand that the stock report is a pre-registration document that confirms that the vehicle to be registered is legally sourced and that duties and taxes have been duly paid. The problem, however, arises when the importers and car assemblers cannot immediately generate the required stock report because the issuance of the Certificate of Tax Payment from the Bureau of Customs oftentimes takes a month. Meanwhile, many individuals buy motor vehicles, especially during the Christmas season (when they have bonus money to spend), and car dealers just have to sell even if they do not have the complete set of the required documents, especially stock report.

"According to the LTO, if all the required documents have been submitted, registration of new or newly bought motor vehicles in all LTO Metro Manila offices, which are now computerized, are processed in less than a day. Official Receipt, Certificate of Registration, stickers and regular license plates (not special) are also issued on the same day.

"Other factors that contribute to the delay in registration are:

"1. The Bureau of Customs transmits all Certificates of Tax Payments that are due to release every Monday. As such, the transmittal of the supporting documents for the stock report takes a week or more.

"2. In case of imported completely knocked down (CKD) units, the engine and chassis are oftentimes not yet engraved. Before the Certificate of Tax Payment can be issued by Customs, the assemblers must first bring these components to the manufacturing/assembly plant for engraving.

"I agree with you that car buyers are punished for a crime they haven't done, it is clear, however, this is not solely the LTO's fault."

Best regards,
Anna Gamboa

TOYOTA F1 TEAM PREPARATION

It's hard work in the pressure cooker

By Raymond B. Tribdino
Contributor

COMPLETING a series of slow chicane testing in Barcelona two weeks ago, Toyota F1's lead driver Mika Salo announced a "very stable car" which was "competent enough." The grueling test marked the first of four track trials involving the team's two cars simultaneously running. These tests will continue until the week before Toyota debuts in Formula One in Melbourne.

It also marked the official running of the car at Formula One speeds and distances, although as early as September 2001, the team has been doing mock qualifying sessions and pit stops.

Major progress made

Managing a total of 58 laps in dry weather, Mika Salo delivered a best time of 1.20.782.

Said Salo in the official press statement that followed: "Having two cars at this test means that we can double the work load and increase our progress rate. For this first day we have had very good weather, which has also had a positive effect. We have carried on working on our new aerodynamic parts and making some comparisons and so far I am quite happy."

Toyota has gone two years in the nonstop development of its F1 contender bringing in racing technology and experience from past wins at various touring car races, LeMans and Indy CART exploits for its chassis and engine development.

But as the new executive vice president of Toyota Motorsport GmbH (TMG) Toshiro Kurusu said, "this (TMG's effort) was not enough." And as the team undertook the first two-car test, the red-and-white Panasonic-sponsored racecar performed well enough to deliver decent lap times.

Technical coordinator Keizo Takahashi, responding to an e-mail interview with the INQUIRER about the outcome of the Barcelona tests explained, "We experienced some slight new car problems in the morning session and lost some track time. The whole objective of testing is to pinpoint such problems and learn how to solve them, which we did very successfully today, so we made some gains."

Second driver Allan McNish managed a 1.21.271 over 77 laps, about a second slower than Salo's pace, but well within the competitive edge demanded by Formula One racing. In an interview with the website Daily F1, McNish commented: "Actually this was a very good day of testing. I have worked mainly on chassis balance and we found a reasonable setup. It was good to do many laps without any real problem. This is the first time I have had the chance to get a full day of dry running with the new car."

Bragging rights

Although no one at the Cologne-based TMG would admit it, the real task that its F1 team is looking at is showing the competition a thing or two. Or at the very least provides enough action to get massive media attention. Toyota F1 team bosses and media managers admit that so much public perception is formed by the outcome of F1 races that it can actually make or break a brand or particular model.

"Toyota has always held high the role of motorsports in expressing the essence of the automobile experience," said TMG president Ove Andersson. "It wants its F1 endeavors to serve as a cornerstone for moving forward along this course in the 21st century."

The team is aiming for a win in the soonest possible time and Toyota Motor Co., parent firm of TMG, increased its research and development efforts by investing millions of dollars in various facilities, including a wind-tunnel test facility. Hiring from its own motorsports database of people the team has immediately sharpened its motorsports management acumen.

In the general sense, the competition means all car manufacturers whose brands are carried directly either as constructors or as engine builders. Ferrari, Mercedes, Renault, Honda and Jaguar are the names that quickly pop to mind.

With Toyota joining the fray, it is not only gambling with its brand name, it is also dipping its finger into a sport it has absolutely no intimate knowledge of. Unlike its archrival Honda that dabbled in it with the RA cars of Soichiro in the '50s and the record-breaking Mugen-powered MPs of McLaren in the '80s, Toyota is basing its F1 car development from scratch.

In the culture of the automotive

IT'S/B9

TEAM Toyota F1 members practicing their moves during mock pit stops.

TOYOTA MOTORSPORTS GMBH

It's hard work . . .

From page B8

world, the best brings in the bucks. Brands linked to winning race drivers get a lot of attention, both in the media and in the sales charts. Therefore, the real task is obviously beating Honda, still running under the British American Racing (BAR) Team in its game. Second is to build a career in this type of racing, which like its rallye exploits of the past, banked on winning more than anything else to achieve brand status. In short, it needs the bragging rights.

Will Toyota win?

It is doubtful that Toyota F1 will win on its debut race. Unless a major pile-up happens causing the top teams to bow out early, as it did for the then Stewart-Ford in 1998, giving it its only GP podium finish.

"We will no doubt have many hurdles to overcome until we can show a satisfactory performance," expressed Toshiro Kurusu during his installation as TMG executive vice president. This statement is an admission of the intense level of performance and technology demanded by F1. It also speaks of the importance of experience in running a team, developing strategy and pleasing sponsors.

It seems like Toyota has a winner in its Toyota F1- Panasonic racecar. With its V10 engine (codename RVX-01), semiautomatic gearbox and TF101 carbon fiber monocoque chassis, push-rod type suspension system and Michelin Pilot tires, Toyota's F1 car is comparatively, not far in terms of technological sophistication, to Ferrari's F2002 or McLaren's new MP.

The challenge is bringing all this technology and personalities together into a hot boiling stew. Boiling in the pressure cooker now are TMG chair Tsutomu Tomita, TMG president Ove Andersson, technical director André De Cortanze and engine chief Norbert Kreyer. These four men will orchestrate team operations from engine startup to the opening of the paddock's sliding gate on March 3 when the Toyota F1 debuts in Australia.

Time . . .

From page B10

will fall short of Fejodap's orders alone. For the achievement of the objectives to have clean air to be substantial, we need more funds," he said.

Even then, cleaning up all the jeepneys would not be enough. Jeepneys comprise only 12 percent of all running vehicles nationwide. Private vehicles comprise 86 percent of the vehicle population, and a substantial number of these also use diesel engines.

Some 3.7 million motor vehicles are registered in the country. Of these, 1.388 million are diesel-fed utility vehicles such as jeeps and taxicabs. These vehicles are generally considered as major sources of air pollution.

In the long run, the maintenance of the jeepneys will be the operator's responsibility. "What is ensured now is that no toxic smoke will be coming out from our jeepneys anymore," said Lazaro.

A remanufactured engine is an old engine overhauled, mounted to the simulator, run, and its power curves adjusted back to the standard. Remanufacturing old diesel engines brings back the original specifications, thus regaining original performance. As a result, no toxic smoke should be emitted.

Relief

The DENR said that next to cardiovascular diseases, respiratory ailments are among the leading causes of death among Filipinos. Respiratory problems are prevalent among sectors exposed daily to air pollution such as drivers, traffic enforcers and the commuting public.

INQUIRER science columnist Dr. Rafael Castillo said in a Nov. 24, 2001 article that a University of the Philippines study found that air pollution in Metro Manila is worsening, and if not immediately addressed the city would be unsuitable for human habitation within 10 years. Lead, found in the exhaust fumes of motor vehicles, is the most harmful toxin to children because it adversely affects the nervous system, reduces their IQs, and slows down motor skills. Urine samples from children living and begging in the polluted streets showed that at least 7 percent had high lead concentration. The phaseout of leaded gasoline is expected to improve this problem, he said.

A wrenching experience

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

THE CHAIR or president of Mitsubishi Motors Philippines is invited to the house of Frederick S. Ong.

What chutzpah! you say. Who is Frederick S. Ong and why should he invite the chair or president of Mitsubishi to his house?

Mr. Ong happens to be an industrial steel bars manufacturer who bought a new 2000 Mitsubishi Lancer MX, the most expensive Lancer model, for his sister last year. On Nov. 15, his sister experienced a flat tire. Since it was drizzling and getting dark, Mr. Ong offered to change it for her.

He got the tire wrench from the car's trunk to loosen the wheel nuts, but the wrench kept on slipping. "I still persisted for about 45 minutes and still not one nut moved a millimeter and the nuts' edges were already starting to get damaged since the tire wrench was slipping," Mr. Ong narrates. "In Tagalog, they call this '*bumibilog ang kanto*.'"

He had no choice but to drive the Lancer running flat to their house less than a kilometer away in Quezon City. Then he called up the nearest Mitsubishi service center and told the service representative who answered about what happened. Could the service center send someone to remove the wheel nuts? Mr. Ong asked.

The Mitsubishi employee told him to go to the nearest vulcanizing shop instead. When Mr. Ong protested that it was already night (around 6:20 p.m.) and that the tire wrench that came with the car was not of the same size as that of the wheel nuts, the service center employee quickly replied that tools are not covered by the Lancer's warranty.

To make a long story short, the Mitsubishi Service Center could not or would not be of any help as it was closing time already. The next day, Mr. Ong and the family driver worked together on removing the wheel nuts of the flat tire. "Out of the four, we only got to remove two after more than an hour," Mr. Ong recalls. "And all of the nuts were severely damaged. We eventually had to destroy the two remaining nuts by torch-cutting them, which also destroyed the screws." Mr. Ong bought a new set of original wheel nuts as replacement and used a caliper to measure them against the tire wrench that Mitsubishi had supplied. He found out that the tire wrench's size was 7/8 inch or 22.22 mm while the size of the wheel nut was 21 mm. No wonder he couldn't remove the wheel nuts! Besides, the wheel nuts were screwed on too tight.

"Having a car manufacturer supply you with the wrong tools is one thing, but the service representative trying to dismiss your problem like that is another," Mr. Ong says. "One thing is for sure, this is the last time I or any member of my family will purchase a Mitsubishi. And anyone I know who will ever think of buying one will get this story from me."

In fairness to Mitsubishi, after Mr. Ong's grievance was brought to their attention, they contacted him and offered to replace the tire wrench. But by that time, Mr. Ong had already purchased a new one of the correct size. "Look," he told them, "the tire wrench costs a few hundred pesos and the screws much cheaper. But how can you quantify the time and energy and the aggravation your defective materials cost us?" Mitsubishi is tracing the service history of the Lancer and also promised to check the assembly of tires "in our line," the tightness of wheel nuts and whether the tire wrench supplied by "the local vendor" deviates from the standard size. "We are doing our best to improve our product and concerns like this is (sic) highly appreciated," Mitsubishi technical service manager Dave Doctor wrote. "We sincerely regret the experience of Mr. Ong and rest assured (sic) that the input will be seriously considered in our assembly line."

Then why is Mr. Ong inviting the highest-ranking executive of Mitsubishi to his house? The invitation was his response to the car manufacturer's asking if they could do anything for him. "Is it too much if I ask them that their president or chairman come over to our house and try removing all the nuts in the three remaining wheels with the said tire wrench?" Mr. Ong wants to know. "As for their regretting the 'experience' I had," he adds, "please tell them that whatever regret they have is nothing compared to the regret I experienced with their product and the regret I have of wasting my time for something that should not have happened in the first place."

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Grand V. 2.5 AT	1,330,000	246,000	25,806
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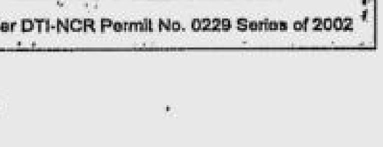

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0229 Series of 2002

Cesar D. Mangawang, Editor

Time for engine change

By Tessa R. Salazar

TAKE out the old worn-out engines and replace them with remanufactured ones—new engines that are processed, tested and have passed the OEM (original equipment manufacturer) standards. Voila! Then we would have jeepneys running sans the toxic fumes.

Jeepney drivers and operators of the Federation of Jeepney Operators and Drivers Association of the Philippines (Fedjodap)—which represents 365 organizations nationwide—could finally avail themselves of the loan package from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to be able to purchase remanufactured engines.

This is a result of a memorandum of agreement signed by the DENR, Fedjodap, Pilipinas Engine Remanufacturing and Reconditioning Corp. and Petron Corp. The MOA is in compliance with the emission standards of the Clean Air Act of 1999. The initial phase would be limited to Fedjodap jeepneys first. The next phase would include other jeepneys and taxicabs, while the last phase would include the buses.

Engine replacement program

Fedjodap members can apply for a loan to purchase remanufactured engines with emission devices. The applications will be processed and prequalified by the DENR's Natural Resources Development Corp. in its financing program. The PERRC will supply the engine, provide warranty and servicing and training of jeepney drivers and operators on the proper handling and maintenance of engines.

Petron gasoline stations will conduct emission testings, provide technical expertise and options for remedies, include repairs, and installation of emission control devices. It also promised to provide "clean diesel fuel" in line with Republic Act 8749 that requires oil companies to comply with new fuel standards.

The DENR said the package consists of an easy financing scheme with fixed low interest, flexible payment terms and grace periods. Full engine warranty, maintenance servicing, supply of special diesel fuel, hassle- and harassment-free operation for one year will be assured. The package also includes free pulling out of the old and installing the new engines as well as reconnecting wirings. Fedjodap said the payment terms have actually come from the members' suggestion.

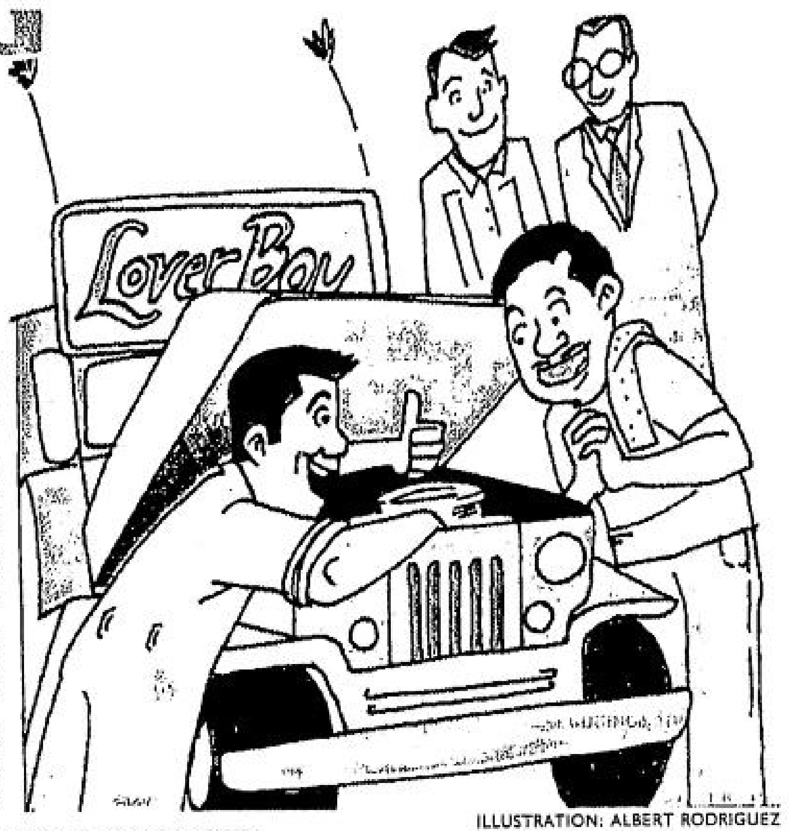

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

Fedjodap spokesperson Zenaida Maranan said the advantage of the program is that the members are not required to pay a down payment.

"A single proprietor who doesn't have capital and who wants his engine changed could avail (of the program). The DENR-NRDC has made it possible to grant us loans without down payment," she said.

Lawyer Nicanor H. Lazaro, PERRC president, said there are 30 seed engines so far. The (DENR) secretary promises to work for an additional budget.

A basic remanufactured engine costs about P95,000, less than half the price of a brand-new one. In terms of performance, said Lazaro, it runs nearly like a brand-new one.

A surplus engine, meanwhile, costs P90,000 upward, said Fedjodap, but its life cycle is unpredictable. A jeepney running on a surplus engine has a retail price of P400,000.

Maranan said the operators would start paying their installments a month after the jeepney starts running and earning. The installment will take two years to pay, or depending on the capacity of an operator.

Better alternative

The project has been in the works since the time of the former Fejodap president Romy Maranan. The engine replacement program is seen by Fedjodap to be a better alternative to the diesel engine surplus from Japan. It is seen as a better alternative to phasing out jeepneys altogether.

Lazaro said that P3.8 million was approved by Environment Secretary Heherson Alvarez to finance the seed engines. "The secretary promised that he would look for additional funds because the P3.8 million is good only for 30 engines. This

TIME/B9

Defective practices cause smog

TO INCREASE fuel delivery and heighten speed, jeepney drivers loosen the adjustment screw of the injection pump. The practice is called *inaariyahan*. While it makes the jeep more agile, it also makes it cough out more smoke.

After the vehicle is apprehended for smoke belching, the driver only has to tighten the adjustment screw to decrease smoke from coming out. This practice, however, also inhibits the jeepney from exercising its "full power." After passing the emission test, drivers usually loosen the adjustment screw again, and its back to the rat race—those who get to the passenger first get to earn more fare.

Nicanor Lazaro, who has spent 30 years in diesel engine technology, revealed this technique, and practice, among jeepney drivers. Lazaro, a lawyer, is the president of the Pilipinas Engine Remanufacturing and Reconditioning Corp. (PERRC) "The present engine condition makes it impossible for jeepney drivers to observe proper handling and maintenance because their units are not maintenance-efficient anymore."

Inadequate technology

Motor shops in the Philippines, he added, lack the technology and knowledge to handle diesel engines' fuel systems. Motor shops in the country also don't have adequate technology to handle the injection pump. The calibration shops should be responsible for this, he said.

Lazaro added that diesel engines' fuel systems are not being taught in trade schools. He, however said there are training centers that specialize in fuel systems.

Said Lazaro: "If the injection pump is the problem, we have three service centers in Metro Manila. There are small service centers outside but are not properly equipped. We were tapped by the government through the Department of Trade and Industry to create criteria for the accreditation of the service center. We have already completed and submitted it but they have not responded yet."

He added that the boundary system forces drivers to make as many trips as they could, in the process overloading and "overrunning" their vehicles.

Diesel engine manufacture

The PERRC is engaged in the manufacture of diesel engines. It had retained and maintained the facilities of the former Isuzu plant in Cavite. The company claims to have complete equipment for diesel technology, and that the government comes to it for testing. Alternative fuel vehicles are also being tested here.

The PERRC management also manages the Zexel training centers in the Philippines. Zexel is a special engine component that needs special servicing. About 85 percent of diesel-fed engines in the country are equipped with Zexel fuel injection pumps.'

It is starting to open doors for lectures and seminars for trade schools and bus companies. It teaches proper engine maintenance.

Tessa R. Salazar

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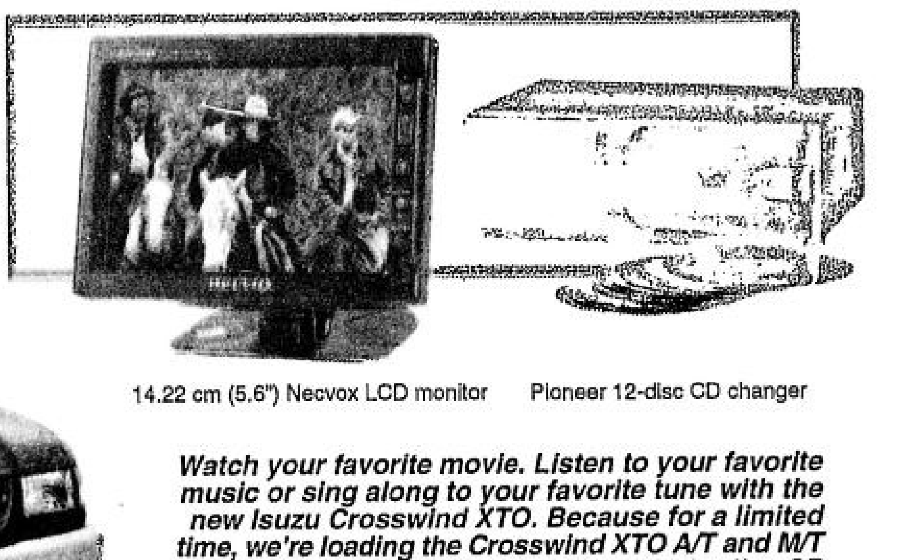

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LIFESTYLE

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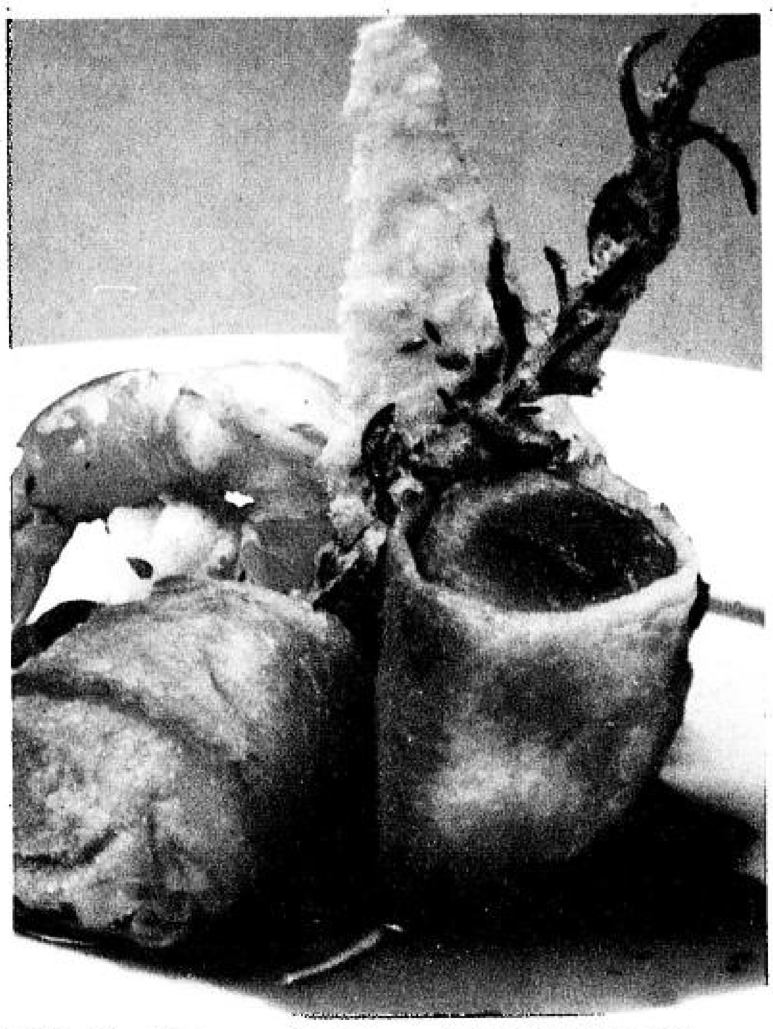

DUO of lamb loin croustillant flavored with lemongrass and grilled tiger prawn, coriander pasta and rosemary sauce

A many splendored meat

The current lamb festival going on at the Peninsula and other choice restaurants should, if anything, debunk certain notions Pinoys have about Australia's globally popular export

By Alex Y. Vergara

LAMB is different from goat. Nor is lamb the same as sheep, which is an adult lamb with a darker, arguably more pungent meat (mutton) when cooked. Think of roasted lamb as Australia's version of *lechon de leche*—tender, juicy, mildly flavored and ultra popular for parties.

"Lamb is technically between 5-9 months old," Nicolas de Visch, chef de cuisine of the Peninsula Manila's Old Manila. "Once it grows beyond a year, it's already considered a sheep."

The restaurant noted for its fusion cuisine is one of 22 establishments participating in "Lamb is a Many Splendored Thing," a month-long promo spearheaded by the Meat & Livestock Australia. Other participants include Mandarin's Tivoli, Hyatt's Al Fresco, Via Mare, Sala, Café Havana, Raj, La Tienda, Golden Ranch, Carpaccio and even S&R Price Club, to name a few.

Misconceptions

There are said to be close to 19 million heads of sheep and lamb in Australia. Last year, the Land Down Under supplied close to 373,000 tons of lamb meat to the world. As the country's promotional arm, Meat & Livestock Australia won't be exporting meat directly to the Philippines. Some Australian companies, such as Werdenberg and Angliss, have established their presence here to do this.

If anything, the Australian body, together with the participating establishments, wants to debunk certain notions Filipinos have about lamb.

For one, lamb meat isn't as expensive as some people think, says Agnes Itchon, the Philippine representative of Meat & Livestock Australia. For another, lamb meat's supposed characteristic smell (*maango*) depends on the cut, manner of cooking and the animal's age.

Each restaurant has been given the freedom to come up with its respective versions of lamb dishes. Roasting lamb, however, is just one way to prepare it. There are also countless

A MANY/ p.C2

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Inventing a restaurant

IN GOOD TASTE

Doreen G. Fernandez

WAY out in Quezon City beyond Cubao and Loyola Heights, via Tandang Sora, beyond the Celebrity Sports Plaza and the entrance to Ayala Village lies a large, food-dedicated compound called Albergus. This is a low-key but very large operation that includes catering (for up to 5,000 people), dining halls for hire for weddings and conferences, function rooms of many sizes, and a tremendous kitchen that can handle all that as well as institutional canteens run by Albergus for corporations and such.

The latest wing of this empire is Francisca Unson's brainchild: the Pandan Seafood & Grill, a restaurant barely 2 months old (16-A Capitol Hills Drive, Old Balara, Diliman, QC; tel. 433-0903). As Imelda Silayan, kitchen designer, tells it, Ms Unson thought about the food she likes (seafood), and (at Imelda's suggestion), the food her cooks already did well, and instantly set up the restaurant. And so, while her daughters Techie and Maryann run the catering and other operations, Ms Unson enjoys her small restaurant.

It is in an open pavilion, which can extend toward the awning-covered back, in what seems like a natural outdoor café, surrounded by other Albergus rooms. The word Albergus, Chita Rosales informed us, was probably derived from the Spanish *albergo*, a medieval inn/haven, perhaps sanctuary, since *albergar* is to lodge, to harbor.

Box-office hits

The menu starts with soups: *sinigang sa miso/sampaloc* of *bangus*, blue marlin and salmon head, a seafood soup and *bulalo*. Didi Canlas, production manager, said they boiled and mashed *sampaloc* and *kamias* in quantity when they were in season, and froze the souring mash for use out of season. The salmon head *sinigang* is the favorite.

Box-office hits, however, are the appetizers. We tried the Sizzling Bangus Sisig (a boon for those forbidden pork) with slices of *siling haba*; the Catfish Bites, or strips of *hito* floured and fried crisp (eat it hot; it toughens fast); and especially the Spicy Shrimp Heads, our favorite. Imagine all those juicy, tasty shrimp heads generally pounded into juice, or even discarded? Here, breaded and fried crisp, they are new-yet-familiar, with the crispness of shell and the modest richness of shrimp head fat.

Pandan Specials include catfish served on rice with a dark, sweetish sauce, *unagi* style, looking indeed like Japanese eel bellies. There are, of course, *hito* with *buro* and *mustasa*, *guinataang tilapia* and seafood *kamikaze* with *bagoong*.

'Lumpia' variations

Vegetable dishes include a derivation of Popiah, or Singaporean *lumpia*, vegetable-filled and with a very sweet sauce (crushed garlic would have made a good balance). *Popiah* in Singapore and Malaysia, is akin to Philippine *lumpia*, Indonesian *loempia*, Amoy *lumpia* and what Americans call the spring roll, except that it is made the occasion for a party. Various *popiah* makings are arranged around a lazy Susan, and the hostess guides the guests in making up their individual rolls from a bevy of ingredients: Flour wrappers, lettuce leaves for lining, chopped vegetables and meats, seaweed, chopped nuts, and flavor-makers like crushed garlic, ginger, fried scallion rings, sauces. The balance and taste of each roll, therefore, is the responsibility of the maker, who is eventually the consumer.

A range of grilled food includes pork tenderloin, *liempo*, chicken barbecue, *bangus* belly, blue marlin and salmon steak with *ensaladang mangga*.

The repertoire of beverages includes alcoholic and nonalcoholic, fruit shakes and soft drinks. Outstanding is the well-chilled *buko* juice served and sealed in the original coconut, accessed through a straw rising from a hole in the neatly shaved nut. After the juice has been consumed, one can ask to have the nut cracked, to get at the sweet hidden flesh.

Side orders are what *pandan* rice, garlic rice and *chicharon* rice are called; short orders are *dinuguan*, *bam-i* and *pancit palabok*.

Prices are reasonable, even within reach of students, whom Pandan wishes to court with special menus.

Service is solicitous and, at the moment, a bit too much. The waiters hover, push food into your plate without thought of your personal timing, in their eagerness to serve. Better this, of course, than the inattentive, hard-to-call waiters in many restaurants.

But "Wait, wait," I had to say more than once. "Let me taste, let me think, let me decide what I want next." That is, after all, the rhythm of a meal: The beats and tones of your taste, your memories, your biorhythm, your interaction with the other diners, your conversation, your gastronomic culture.

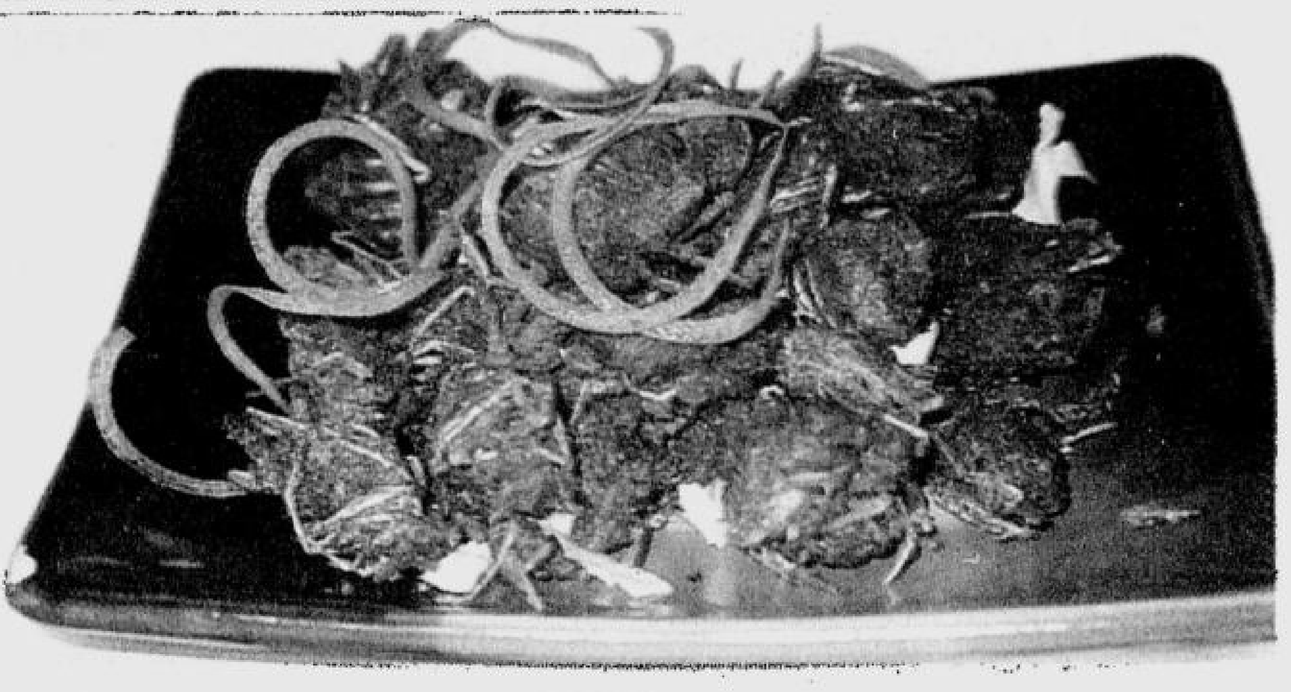
They will learn, I know, and become an asset to Pandan Grill. I would return, even just for the Spicy Shrimp Heads. They're worth it.

Postscript

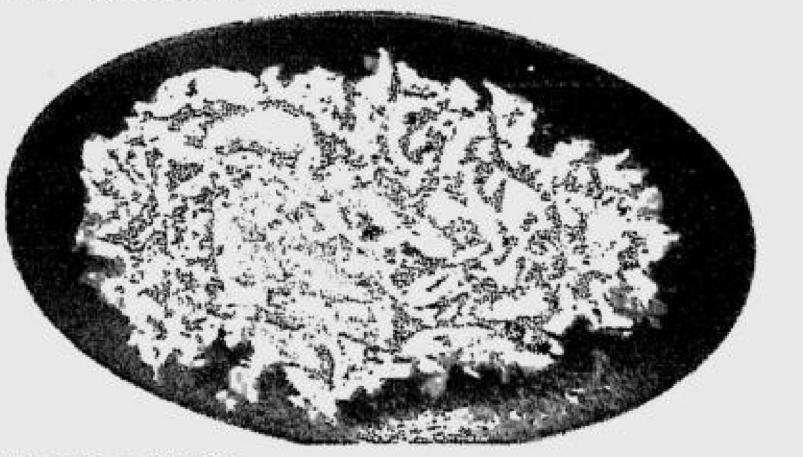
HOLIDAY spillovers bring to my attention (and tasting) some special food worth noting down for today and for next Christmas. Lydia Veneracion of Bulacan Sweets, for example, has *pastillas de leche* mix in a rectangular plastic container, which she calls Haleyang Gatas. Also in air-tight, reusable, microwavable containers come the light, crisp, Laguna *okoy* with tiny shrimps, which miraculously need not be refried; they stay crisp. And, for *buro* fans, there is *burong hito* red with *angkak*, that only needs to be fried with lots of native garlic.

Sr. Christine Tan's urban poor community makes a range of Alay Kapwa products, including a special *sampaloc* candy that offers a choice. Within the first wrapper are grains of salt, in which the *sampaloc* balls can be dipped, if one wants them salty-sweet. Discard the salt if you wish, for inside the final wrapper the balls are sugared, sour-sweet as *sampaloc* is. A small, lovely adaptation of Filipino tastes.

Juicy, tasty shrimp heads, usually pounded into juice or thrown out, are breaded and fried crisp; they are new-yet-familiar, with the crispness of shell and the modest richness of shrimp head fat

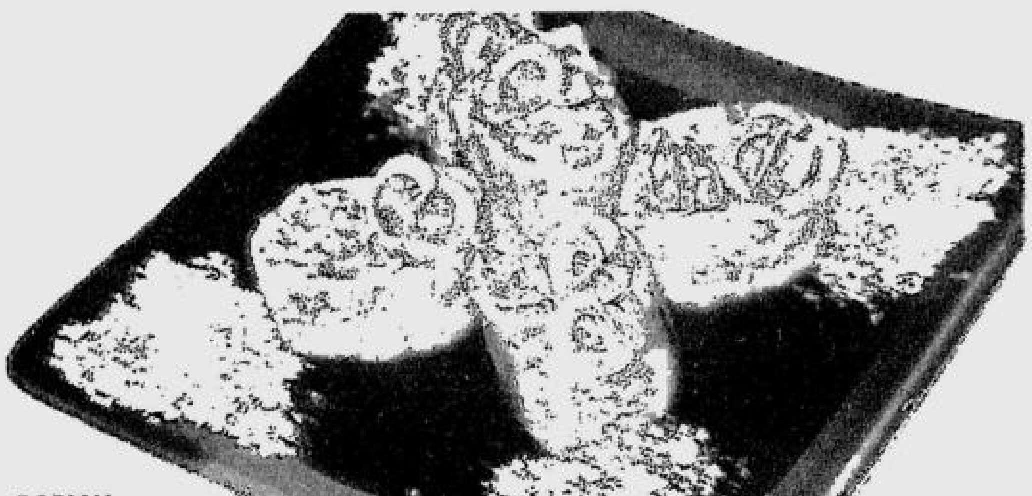


SPICY Shrimp Heads



SIZZLING Bangus Sisig

DIDI Canlas, production manager



POPIAH

Special rates for shop members

S&R PRICE Membership Shopping, which opens its third store on March 18 on Ramon Magsaysay, Congressional Avenue, Bago Bantay, hosts two parking lot events on March 9-10.

New members and those interested to sign up, as well as existing members, can look forward to live bands and other entertainment (March 9-10 event only), bags of goodies and a very low introductory price of P700 for both Business and Diamond memberships (regular prices are P1,200 and P1,500, respectively). New members of the Congressional warehouse need only to show proof of membership to get their free gift packs.

S&R Price is an American-style shopping warehouse concept created more than 20 years ago by Sol and Robert Price, giving its members access to high-quality, name-brand products and services for less. In the Philippines, the company has already opened two stores—the first one at Bonifacio Global City and the second one at Barangay Sta. Lucia, Ortigas Extension, Pasig City.

At S&R Price, shoppers will find everything for their home and office needs at everyday low prices. The wide selection of merchandise at S&R Price includes fresh produce, beef, pork and poultry, fresh seafood, groceries, clothes and intimate apparel, electronics, business supplies, desk, chairs and tables, computers and computer software, health and beauty aids, toys.

Shoppers can also avail of other services at S&R Price like a fresh bakery; rotisserie chicken; well-known food service that offers New York-style pizza, hotdogs, churros, calzone and sodas; optical shop; tire center; pharmacy; bank and one-hour photo developing.

Call S&R Price Membership Shopping at 929-8888 and 925-9957.

NEW ICE CREAM FRUIT FLAVORS
Swiss Miss Premium Ice Cream, known for its all-natural imported ingredients, introduces four new ice cream fruit flavors. Fruits 'n Cream captures the goodness of fruit salad with a mix of vanilla ice cream and peaches, pears, grapes, pineapples, strawberries and cherries. Mango Royale blends mango ice cream with ripe yellow mango chunks. Strawberry Rhapsody gives the mouth-watering taste of freshly picked strawberries. California Sweet Corn is a creamy ice cream sprinkled with golden corn kernels.

A many splendored meat

From page C1

ways to cook and combine it with various ingredients. De Visch, for instance, came up with a stylized version of the classic Greek dish Moussaka using lamb instead of minced beef.

Tender is the meat

The roasted lamb was drenched in dark-red lamb stock, made more savory through a combination of roasted lamb bones, vegetables and tomato sauce made to simmer for almost a day. It was then garnished with roasted onions topped with roasted eggplant and goat's cheese for added flavor. Not a hint of *ango* assailed our noses. Rather we were able to savor the delightful, rich taste of tender lamb without feeling satiated.

The other main course was an à la "surf 'n turf" version of lamb loin, roasted, cut in two, stuffed with basil leaves, stuck with sticks of lemongrass and wrapped in plain *lumpia* wrapper. The chef pan-roasted it in a dash of cooking oil before pouring a little lamb stock over it. This time, he did away with the eggplant by garnishing the dish with grilled tiger prawn, coriander pasta and rosemary sauce.

"Some people, of course, would want to cook lamb at home after trying some of the dishes," says Itchon. "That's why we've tapped S&R Price Club to participate in the promo." Rustan's Supermarket is also offering raw lamb.

Admittedly, an upscale restaurant is a poor gauge of lamb meat's acceptability among Filipinos. Most of these establishments, after all, cater to well-traveled and adventurous diners. There are a number of positive signs, however, that Filipinos are starting to favor Mary's pet over Babe.

Werdenberg alone has shipped 10 tons of lamb meat before the start of the promo. Based on Itchon's estimate, the company will be able to sell 14 tons of lamb meat before the promo ends on Feb. 28. Wait until Filipino chefs come up with their version of *calderetang* lamb.

E-mail the author at avergara @inquirer. com.ph

ROASTED lamb fillet in gingerbread crust, goat's cheese and eggplant Moussaka, fava beans and tomato risotto in tempura

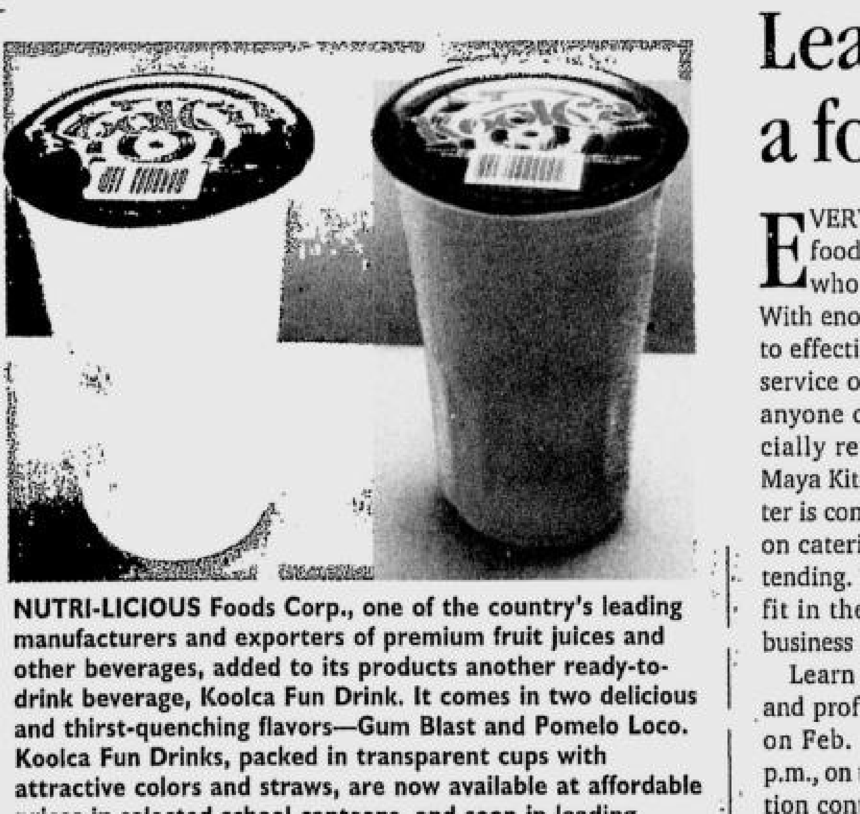
Learn how to manage a food business

EVERYBODY can now start a food business, even people who have regular 8-5 jobs. With enough knowledge on how to effectively manage a catering service or a bar and restaurant, anyone can open a more financially rewarding venture. The Maya Kitchen Culinary Arts Center is conducting evening classes on catering, waitering and bartending. These classes can surely fit in the schedules of all food business enthusiasts.

Learn effective, cost-friendly and profitable business catering on Feb. 26, 27 and 28, 5:30-8 p.m., on the following topics: portion control, costing, inventory, table layout, equipment sourcing and actual preparation of popular Filipino dishes such as *morcon*, *galantina*, pork *asado*, soy chicken, roast pork, baked macaroni, all-meat *paella* and special *gulaman* desserts.

Enrol in Integrated Workshop on Waitering & Bartending on Feb. 26-28, 6-9 p.m., and learn creative techniques for efficient table setting and attractive arrangement, napkin folding and skirting; suggested selling techniques, types of table services, setting up service station and check point, serving beverage and entrée; bartending basics; cocktail mixing and garnishing; and personality enhancement.

Visit the Maya Kitchen at 8/F Liberty Building, Arnaiz Avenue (Pasay Road), Makati City or call 892-1185/5011 local 108.



NUTRI-LICIOUS Foods Corp., one of the country's leading manufacturers and exporters of premium fruit juices and other beverages, added to its products another ready-to-drink beverage, Koolca Fun Drink. It comes in two delicious and thirst-quenching flavors—Gum Blast and Pomelo Loco. Koolca Fun Drinks, packed in transparent cups with attractive colors and straws, are now available at affordable prices in selected school canteens, and soon in leading supermarkets, groceries, convenience stores and *sari-sari* stores nationwide.

SINGAPORE Airlines' international culinary panel

Memorable meals on wings

By Cathy Babao-Guballa

MENU on Economy class

FAMILIES who love to eat and travel will rejoice in the service that Singapore Airlines bestows on its esteemed passengers. A month ago, a group of journalists were treated by the airlines to a meal-tasting event at their Silver Kris Lounge (for Business Class passengers) located at the Naia Terminal 1 so that they could experience for themselves the preparation and care that goes into every meal served on a Singapore Airlines (SIA) flight.

The food that SIA passengers are served is meticulously prepared under strict quality control standards at the MacroAsia-Eurest Catering Services (MECS) whose kitchen and offices are just a heartbeat away from the airport terminal. MECS is the very first in-flight catering center in the Philippines to have been given the ISO 9002 Certification. It also has the first fully functional in-flight catering center to operate within the premises of the Naia.

An international culinary panel composed of famous chefs from the world over, some of whom are David Burke, recipient of the first award ever given by Chef magazine and is touted to be "the most copied chef in New York"; Yeung Koon Yat of Hong Kong, who is called the King of Abalone and a legend in his lifetime; and Satish Arora, internationally regarded for defining Indian cuisine, among others, oversee the planning that goes into each and every SIA menu.

Samplings

The 2001 Kalakbay Awardee for International Airline of the Year, SIA's First Class meal offerings are changed on a monthly basis, its Business Class meals, every other month and its Economy Class meals on a quarterly basis. That evening at the Silver Kris Lounge, journalists were treated to a sampling of a First Class meal composed of Oven-Roasted Salmon with lemon crust, sautéed herb spatzel, corn kernels and beans; Beef Steak Tagalog with mixed vegetables and garlic fried rice and, for dessert, Warm Banana Strudel with vanilla ice cream. Some of the Business Class offerings laid out were salad of mozzarella cheese and tomato; Grilled Beef Fillet with Herb-roasted Mushrooms and two ways potatoes; Stir-Fried Chicken with ginger and spring onion, selected vegetables and fragrant rice. From the Economy Class selection was good old Escabeche in calamansi sauce, sautéed beans, glazed carrots and steamed rice.

In addition to these meals, snacks and a wide array of refreshments are offered on all classes of service plus freshly brewed cappuccino and espresso (on Business and First) and virgin olive oil in place of butter served with bread. On all classes of service there is the unique Kris Chili sauce, made from an original Singapore Airlines recipe to spice up meals. For discriminating palates, there is a "Book the Cook" program, SIA's unique meal ordering service which lets the passenger choose exactly what he or she would like to eat from a wide range of tempting dishes.

Prior to the meal-tasting, journalists were also treated to the comforts of an SIA flight aboard a Boeing 777 aircraft. Nope, the flight didn't actually get off the ground but beginning March 31, SIA will utilize only Boeing 777s on all its thrice-daily flights between Manila and Singapore. Dubbed the Jubilee 777, this particular series has the most spacious passenger cabin ever developed. The aircraft itself has award-winning interiors with large overhead compartments but at the same time, when they are closed, they allow ample overhead clearance so much so that a 6'2" passenger can easily pass under the center bins! Passengers seated next to a window in Economy Class also have full standing headroom—no more crouching on this aircraft, folks.

Entertainment

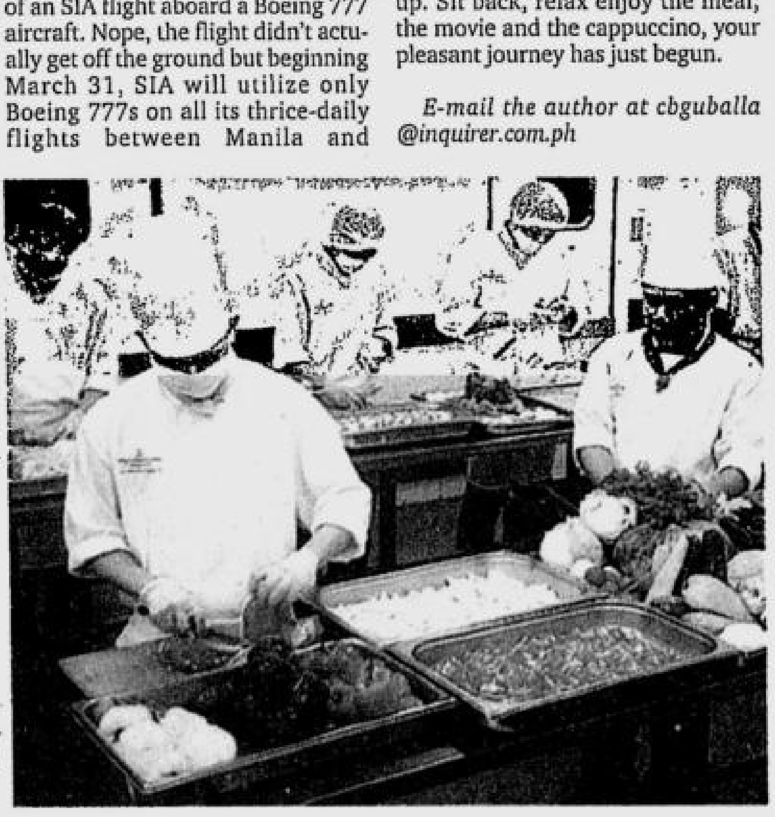
However, the best part of the aircraft, and perhaps the most important, especially during long flights, are its seats and its entertainment system. Its state-of-art in-flight entertainment system, KrisWorld, offers more than 90 entertainment options, including video and audio programming, games and news. Passengers can choose from a selection of 14 movies, seven channels of short features and 12 broadcast audio channels. And, for the kids and teens there are 35 Nintendo and 13 PC games available! Every seat has its own screen and remote control—no more craning necks and straining eyes. And mothers travelling with young children can heave a sigh of relief and rest as the kiddies fiddle with the Nintendo or figure out which movie to see next. Plus, the remote control unit doubles up as an in-flight telephone, allowing passengers to make calls virtually anywhere in the world, via the satellite network, and even to other passengers on board.

The First Class seats are 22 inches wide, among the widest in the airline industry. Raffles or Business Class is built with seats that are 20 inches wide and the seats feature electrically adjustable lumbar support and footrests with personal stowage under the armrests. On Economy Class, seats designed by a world-renowned car seat designer are 18.5 inches wide, again, among the widest in the industry.

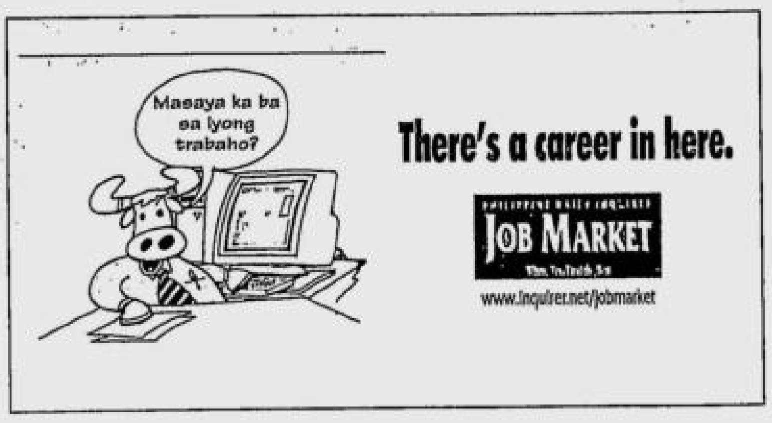
The Jubilee 777s are the only ones in the world to offer Economy seats that pivot to support passengers as they recline and include footrests and adjustable, winged headrests. The headrests can also slide up or down to a position that best suits one and "ears" adjusted for better head and neck support.

Next time you're on an SIA flight, just plop the kiddies onto those cushy, wide seats and buckle them up. Sit back, relax enjoy the meal, the movie and the cappuccino, your pleasant journey has just begun.

E-mail the author at cbguballa @inquirer.com.ph



WORLD STANDARD. MacroAsia-Eurest kitchen at Naia



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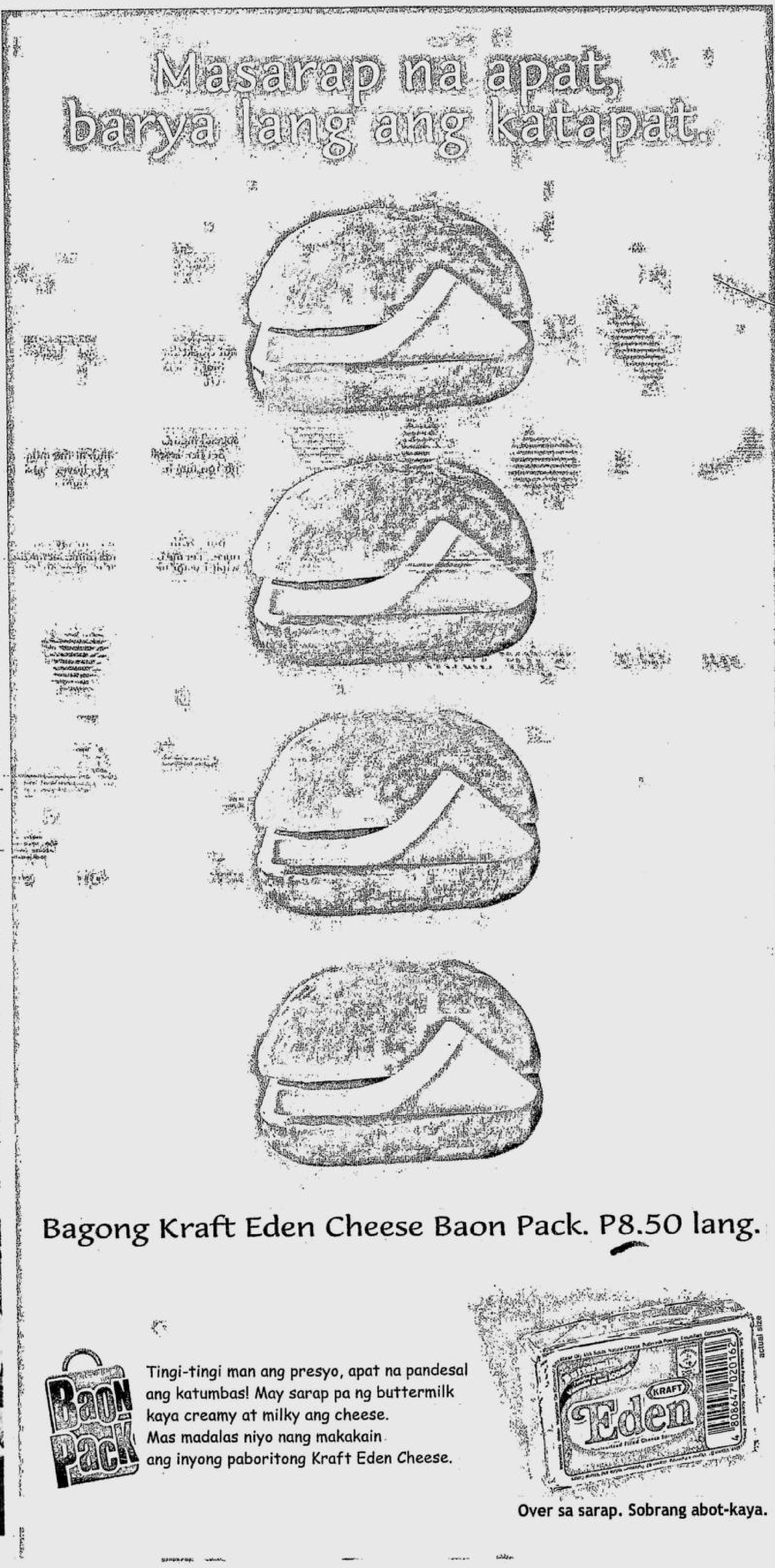
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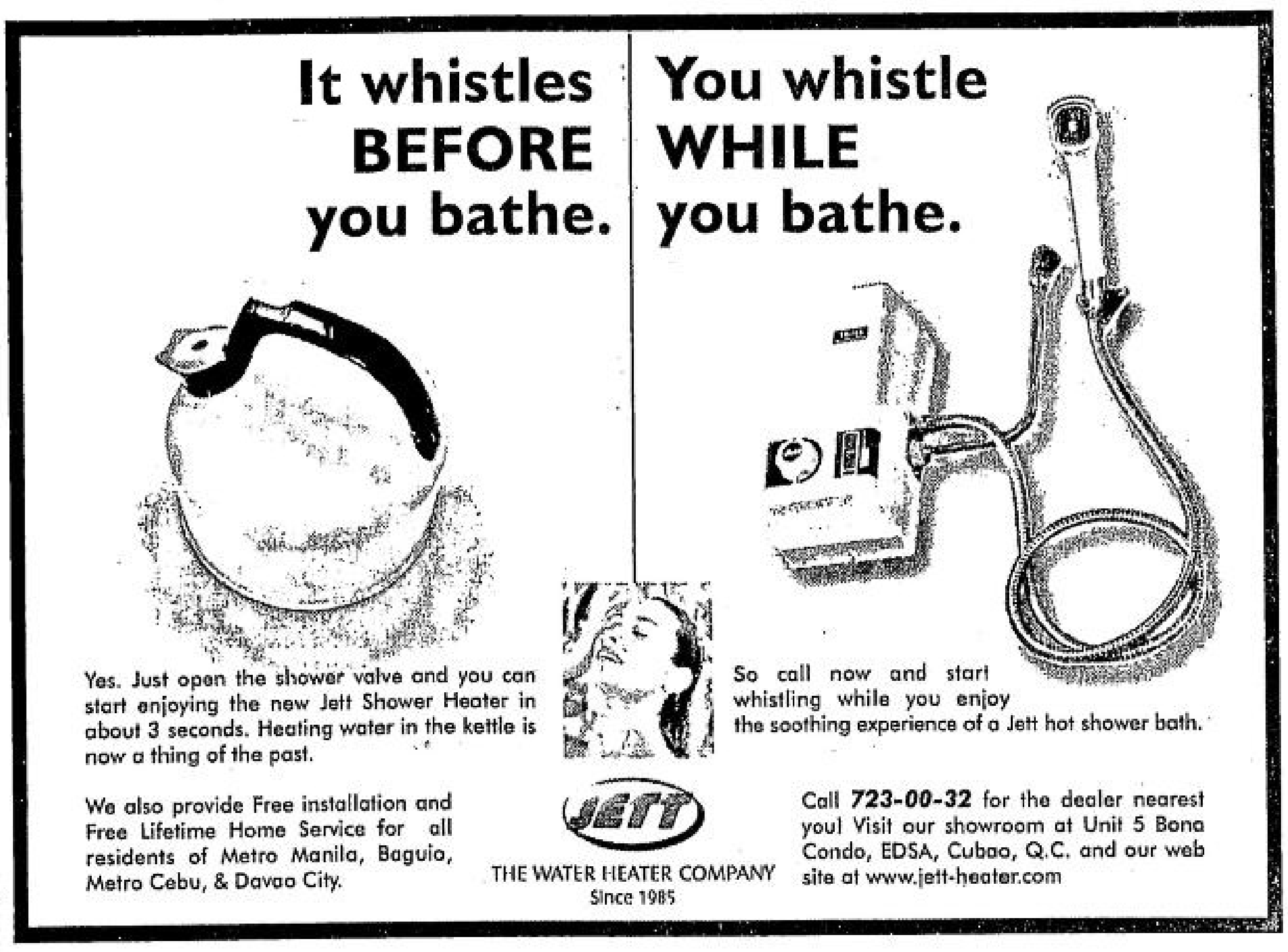
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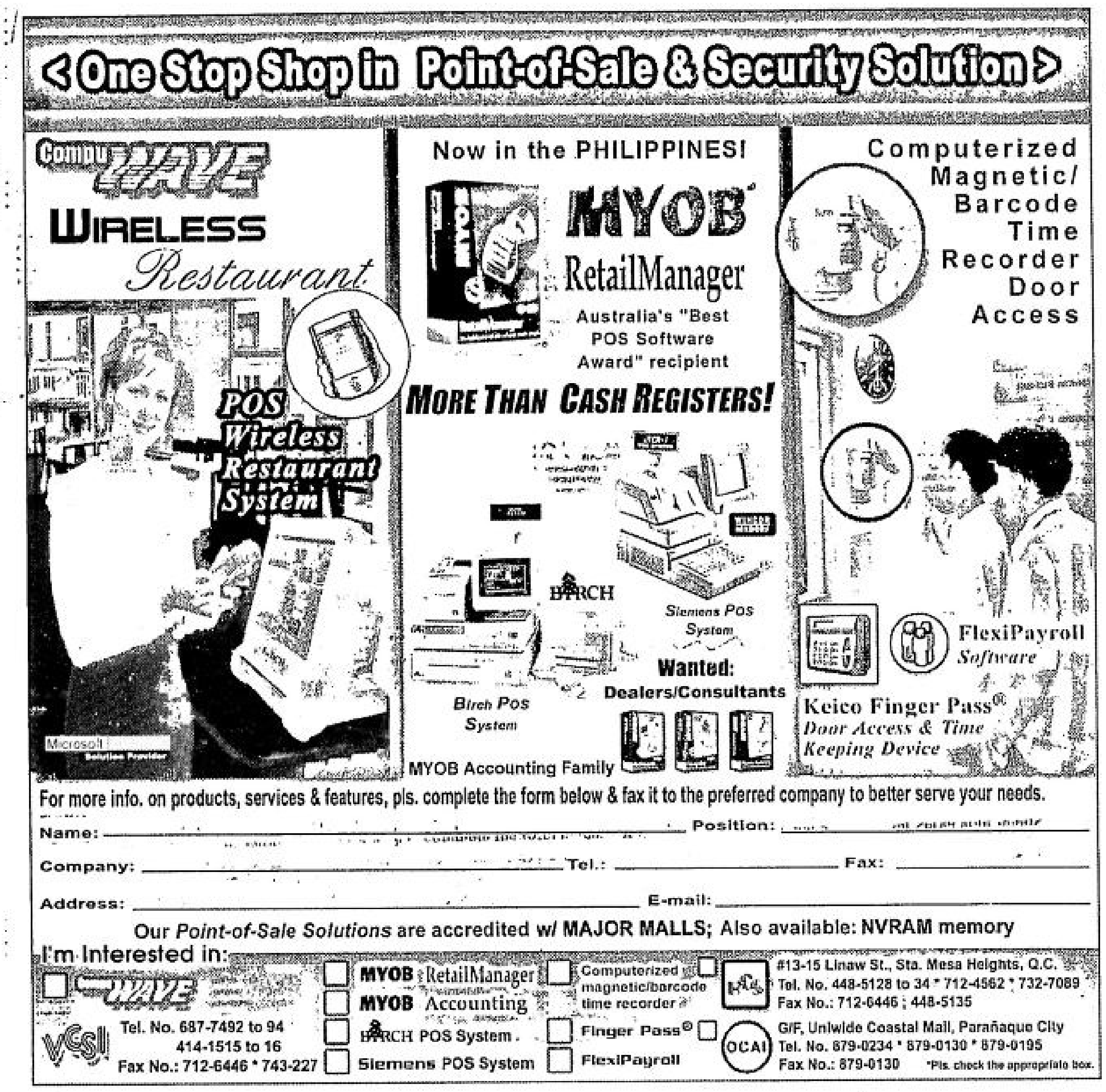
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PASTA Seafood

Zaap means yum

By James Perez Ong
Contributor

It is the Thai word for 'delicious' and earnest diners should take their cue from there

THERE is something about restaurants that take the easy way out and label their food "fusion" in order to sound new, hip and American that turns you off. More confusing are those that claim their food to be "Asian fusion," which, when you think about it, is really an oxymoron, as Asian food is *already* a fusion on its own. It's with this challenge that the family that brought us Flavours and Spices, the consistently delicious Thai restaurant in Greenbelt, recently opened Zaap: Fusion Food Studio in Rockwell's Power Plant Mall.

The name means *masarap* in Thai, and earnest diners should take the cue from there. The people behind it have put Asian fusion cuisine in its proper context by topbilling Asian ingredients and spices against Western staples like tortillas, French dressing and pasta.

The real thing

Zaap is located in the mall's newly developed wing and, as you enter, you may get blinded by the restaurant's neon green and orange interiors, or end up with a bad back from the metal tables and chairs. You may even look longingly across the hall, where the Starbucks sofas seem to be cozier. But persevere, Zaap is the real thing, and their carrot cake, peppered with crushed walnuts and topped with cream cheese icing, is several grades better than those sold in a certain café chain.

But before desserts, appetizers. We recommend the Indonesian Beef Satay with Tortillas. The thinly stripped beef sirloin is chewy soft and when you close your eyes and take in its heavenly smell, you can imagine yourself in the middle of a market in Yogyakarta, surrounded by piles of exotic Indonesian spices. The best way to eat this is by hand and it's fairly easy—take a strip of beef, lay it on still-warm tortilla, take a leaf of lettuce, lay it again on the tortilla, then wrap it around. You'll be amazed at how fine and flour-free the tortilla is, which isn't homemade but imported from Australia.

A perfect complement to this meaty dish are the vegetable sticks. While most establishments are content to just strip and slice veggies and serve them with a mayonnaise dip, Zaap does better by individually wrapping celery and carrot sticks in spring roll wrappers, which are lined with a waif-thin slice of Parmesan cheese. Parmesan is never meant to be intrusive and, in this dish, the slight hint of its presence combines well with the Thai-style salsa dip of blended tomatoes, basil and coriander leaves in meat sauce.

For the main course, an interesting pasta dish is the one with salted fish imported from Thailand. It is served with Italian-style noodles but the sauce is a blend of olive oil and garlic mixed with Asian herbs like onion, coriander leaves and basil to bring out the best taste of the fish. The Lechon Kawali Salad is not for the queasy. It is a poor excuse to serve crispy-fried pork belly with mixed green salads and a special dressing, but that doesn't mean it isn't addictive. In fact, it is a good prelude to the Lechon Kawali Rice, which has an extra serving of pork *asado*.

Light option

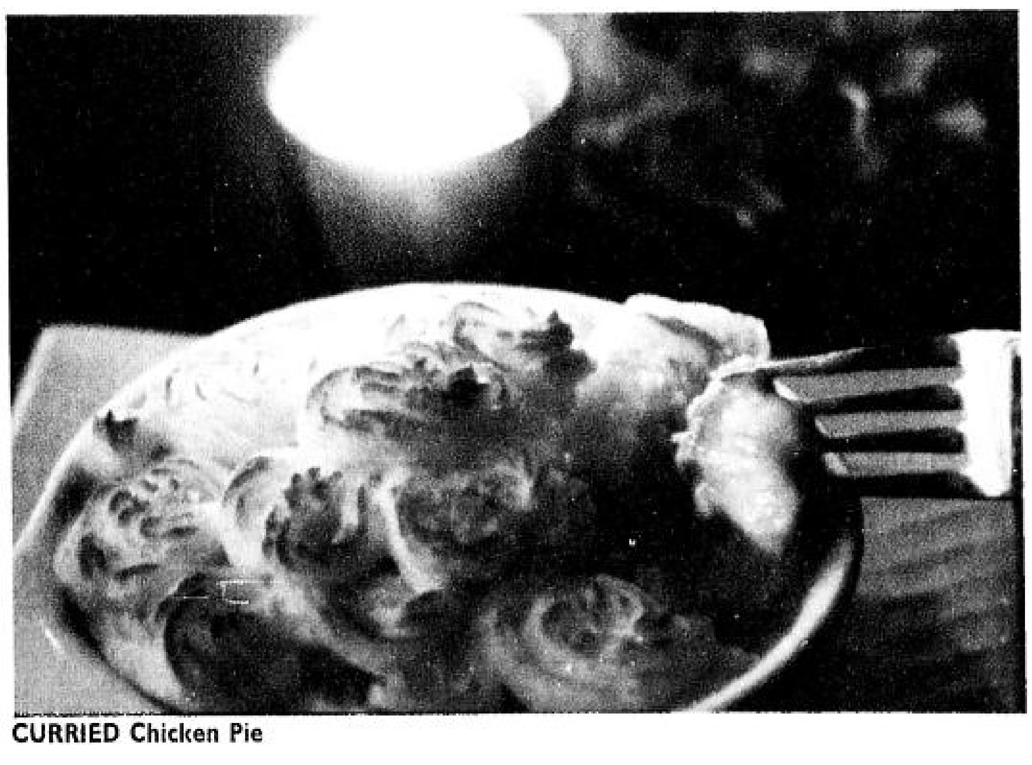
It is always tempting to eat a heavy meal of Asian dishes, but there are options for those who want to go light. The Roast Duck Sandwich, cooked Chinese-style, is layered with watercress, lettuce, sweet corn and apricot dressing. It is served with extra-soft and paper-thin creamy rolls that melt like butter in your mouth. You have to eat the sandwich slowly, to prolong the sensuous thrill of tangled textures and perfumes. Kow Soi Gkai is the most famous noodle soup in the Chiang Mai region in Thailand and here it is in its authentic form, a blend of crispy egg noodles with chicken in curry sauce.

What to sip in between dishes? The *pandan* shake washes away the taste of certain herbs and clears your palate for the next deluge of spices, while the rest of the fruit juices are reliable in freshness. The owners recommend the strawberry milk shake but, frankly, with all the food you'll end up eating here, you're better off saving the calorie space.

Zaap's dishes are simple and easy to eat and ideally shared, and the prices are easy on the pocket, with an average price of P150.

At night, they turn down the lights, put candles on the table and serve beer, including Tsingtao, imported from China. It's not clear whether the pun is intended, but the alcohol entries in the menu fall under a category that happens to be called Mind Zaapers.

ROAST Duck Sandwich


CURRIED Chicken Pie